# MEMOIRS

OF THE

# *COURTS*

OF

## BERLIN, DRESDEN, WARSAW, AND VIENNA,

IN THE YEARS 1777, 1778, AND 1779.

By N. WILLIAM WRAXALL, Esq.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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# CONTENTS

OF

# THE SECOND VOLUME.

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## LETTER XVIII.



## LETTER XIX.

LETTER XX.



LETTER XXI.

LETTER XXII.



LETTER XXIII.

LETTER XXIV.



LETTER XXV.



LETTER XXVI.

LETTER XXVII.



LETTER XXVIII.



LETTER XXIX.

LETTER XXX.



LETTER XXXI.

LETTER XXXII.



LETTER XXXIII.

LETTER XXXIV.



LETTER XXXV.



# MEMOIRS, &c.

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## LETTER XVIII.

*Journey from Cracow to Warsaw.—Appearance of that capital.—Want of police and regulations.—The Vistula.—Praga.—Signs of decay and ruin.—Jews.—Reflections on the state of Poland.*

WARSAW, *June* 28th, 1778.

NO tract of country in Europe can offer fewer objects of information, curiosity, or amusement, in the common acceptation of the terms, than that which extends from the gates of Cracow to the suburbs of Warsaw; a distance of at least two hundred miles through the central provinces of Poland. It may however be justly said, that the appearance of the country

country itfelf, the afpect of its inhabitants, and the face of every individual, excite reflexions, which, if not pleafing, are neverthelefs important and inftructive. In the midft of a foil naturally rich and fertile, they are in want of common neceffaries. I could fcarcely procure bread in any of the wretched pofthoufes at which I ftopped, except of a kind fo black, four, and execrable, as not to be eaten. Inns there are none which merit the name: but the Jews, who form the majority of the people in the villages, feem to keep alive the little fubfifting induftry. The Poles, among whom depopulation, oppreffion, and mifery, appear under every poffible fhape, manifeft in their looks and their whole appearance, the utmoft poverty: even the churches are compofed of wood, and the hovels of the peafants are made of the fame materials. I fcarcely faw a nobleman's or gentleman's houfe of any kind; and the roads are either left in their natural ftate, or are made, where the ground is marfhy, by fir trees laid acrofs them clofe to each other,

as

as in many parts of Ruſſia. The very water is moſtly unwholeſome and ſtagnant. It muſt however be admitted that the poſts are tolerably well ſerved; and though the horſes are ſmall and weak, yet as numbers ſupply the defect of ſtrength, a traveller cannot reaſonably complain of the want of expedition. As I drew near Warſaw, I ſaw no marks of opulence, cultivation, or luxury, ſuch as uſually beſpeak the approach to a capital. A wide, open plain, interſperſed with little woods of fir or birch, and equally deſtitute of natural, as of artificial beauty, extends quite to the entrance of the city.

This metropolis itſelf ſeems to me, like the Republic of which it is the nominal head, to unite the extrêmes of civilization and of barbariſm, of magnificence and wretchedneſs, of ſplendor and miſery; but, unlike all other great cities of Europe, theſe extremes are not ſoftened, approximated, and blended by any intermediate gradations. The middle orders of men, who every where elſe form the moſt numerous claſs

 of

of citizens, the moſt uſeful, and the moſt induſtrious, appear hardly to have any exiſtence here. Palaces and ſheds, the manſions of the great, and the cottages of the poor, compoſe excluſively the larger portion of Warſaw. It is like an aſſemblage of nobles and ſlaves, of lords and vaſſals, ſuch as the darkneſs of the middle ages, when feudal tyranny prevailed univerſally, might have exhibited; but which, happily for mankind, is now no where to be ſeen except in Poland. Even Conſtantinople is in this reſpect far leſs barbarous; and the genius of the Ottoman government, little calculated as it is to promote the felicity of the people, nevertheleſs ſeems more favourable to commerce, ingenuity, and the arts that humanize ſociety, than the city from which I am now writing. The deſpotiſm of one man, however degrading or pernicious, is yet leſs deſtructive than the tyranny of a thouſand petty deſpots; and the Turks, though fallen from their antient ſplendor, do not preſent a picture of national degradation or humili-

ation, ſuch as the Poles at preſent offer to the world.

As I walk through the ſtreets of Warſaw, and ſurvey the buildings around me, I am tempted to imagine myſelf in ſome ſcattered and half-ruined village. All the municipal defects of Cracow exiſt here in a greater degree. I am no longer ſurprized that a King ſeated in his own carriage, ſurrounded by guards and attendants, could be ſeized and carried off in the midſt of his capital, as happened to Staniſlaus ſcarcely ſeven years ago. In a city where no lamps are lighted even in winter, and no precautions are taken for general ſecurity, any deſperate banditti, protected by the night, may commit the moſt atrocious crimes. I am not amazed to hear Mr. Wroughton, the Engliſh Miniſter, ſay, that he has ſeen Prince Radzivil, one of the greateſt Poliſh noblemen, when coming to court in his own coach drawn by the fineſt ſet of horſes in the kingdom, ſo completely ſtuck faſt in the mire at a hundred yards from the Royal Palace, as to make it

neceſſary for him to be taken out, and carried thither in the arms of his ſervants. At the cloſe of the late reign, when Auguſtus the third died, no longer ago than 1763, Warſaw was almoſt wholly unpaved. Even at preſent, in this beautiful ſeaſon of the year, after violent or ſudden rains, many of the ſtreets are rendered totally impaſſable on foot, and nearly ſo on horſeback, or in a carriage. The buildings are ſo irregular, ſcattered, and disjoined, that great ſpaces remain unoccupied, and even unlevelled, in the moſt frequented parts of the metropolis. In front of Staniſlaus's palace, ſo indecently neglected are the ſewers, that the ſmell is peſtilential. A nation too indolent to remedy ſuch nuiſances, or ſo accuſtomed to them as not to perceive how incompatible they are with ſafety, comfort, and ſalubrity, ſeems not far removed from barbariſm: yet, by a ſingular contradiction, Warſaw preſents under other aſpects all the refinement of Paris, the arts of Florence, and the ſplendor of Peterſburgh,

The Viſtula, though conſiderably broader than the Thames at Windſor, wants beauty, depth, and every artificial aid or improvement. Its ſides are in general low and ſandy; its channel is obſtructed by banks which continually ſhift; and the colour of its waters is thick and muddy, like thoſe of the Tyber. The Poles ſeem ſcarcely to be conſcious that it is navigable; and it is rare to ſee upon it a veſſel of any kind. A bridge of boats, laid acroſs the ſtream, conducts to Praga, a town or ſuburb on the eaſtern ſide. Praga is a wretched collection of cottages or huts, built of wood, and ſcattered irregularly in the ſand without order or plan; ſuch as Tartars, and only Tartars would conſtruct or inhabit. Yet this is the principal object ſeen from the windows of the royal palace, which ſtands on the oppoſite bank. It is large, but cannot be eſteemed a regular, or a magnificent edifice. The two laſt kings, Auguſtus the Second and Third, not chuſing to inhabit it, erected another, in which, when at Warſaw they

commonly refided and held their court, ftill denominated from them, "the Saxon Palace." Hardly a fingle public monument of art, tafte, or devotion, exifts in this metropolis. The very churches and palaces are unfinifhed, or falling to decay. Among the latter are many which want inhabitants; not more than a fourth part of the great families who refided here at the death of Auguftus the Third, being now in a ftate to maintain their dignity. Prince Radzivil's palace, one of the moft fuperb, is converted into a playhoufe. Such is the wretched ftate of the capital of Poland; a country which previous to the late difmemberment, was larger than the nine Circles of the German Empire.

The people accord in their appearance too well with the afpect of every thing around them. I never beheld fo many objects of horror or compaffion, as prefent themfelves in the ftreets: many of thefe are a difgrace to humanity, as well as a reproach to the national police. Warfaw is likewife

likewiſe crowded with Jews, who form a conſiderable proportion of the inhabitants. They wear a diſtinguiſhing dreſs, and derive a very precarious ſubſiſtence from the arts of fraudulent commerce, moſt of them being extremely poor. From time to time they are plundered, exiled, impriſoned, and maſſacred: yet, under ſuch accumulated vexations, they continually multiply, and are here found in far greater numbers than even at Amſterdam.

After this diſguſting deſcription of Warſaw, you will be aſtoniſhed when I add, that notwithſtanding the picture of public miſery which it diſplays, it is difficult not to be pleaſed with it as a temporary reſidence. Many circumſtances conduce to render the place more than ordinarily agreeable to a ſtranger. The King is, of all the Princes whom I have ever ſeen, the moſt acceſſible, eaſy, and even captivating in his manners. I have been in his ſociety; and one cannot be ſurpriſed, on conſidering his perſon and addreſs, at the partiality of Catharine for

Count

Count Poniatowſki. The Poliſh and Lithuanian nobility of both ſexes, whatever may be their eſſential defects of character, want none of the exterior graces of deportment. In the palaces of the Oginſkis, the Czartoriſkis, the Lubomirſkis, and numerous others, is ſtill to be found every diſplay of refinement, hoſpitality, and magnificence. Many of the great families continue to live in a ſtyle almoſt royal, amidſt the ruins of their agonizing and expiring country. In no court or capital of Europe are to be found men more accompliſhed, nor women more beautiful, poliſhed, and agreeable. As an Engliſhman, I have the greateſt perſonal obligations to Mr. Wroughton, his Majeſty's Miniſter, who has rendered my ſtay here at once delightful and informing. His long reſidence in Poland; his intimate acquaintance, or rather friendſhip with the King, both before and ſince his elevation to the throne; his perfect knowledge of this country, whoſe convulſions, decline, and partition he has witneſſed: the variety of curious

and

and interefting anecdotes with which his converfation abounds; thefe circumftances, added to numerous proofs of his regard, have in fome meafure blinded, or reconciled me to the wretchednefs which I perceive on all fides.

I contemplate this country as the moft inftructive and awful of political leffons: I even efteem myfelf fortunate in being able to furvey it, before Poland finks and is erafed from the lift of nations, or is incorporated with the great furrounding monarchies; an event which, according to every appearance, cannot be very diftant; and which is, indeed, now rather to be wifhed than deprecated, even by the Poles themfelves. I have been enabled to afcertain, from fome of the higheft fources of information, the principal *external* caufes which led to the partition of Poland: for, in the deteftable and ruinous form of their conftitution, muft be fought the *internal* fource of all their national calamities. What elfe, in fact, could rationally be expected

as the natural death of a country, where the crown is at once elective, venal, and powerless; where the nobility are independent, uncontrollable, and tyrannical; while the people are sunk in slavery, ignorance, oppression, and poverty! We should rather wonder, that in the present progressive state of Europe, Poland has lasted thus long, instead of being surprised at its ruin and approaching extinction. In my next letter I mean to endeavour to delineate the immediate causes of that great event, the partition; as well as to consider its effects, present and future. If it be not a pleasing, it must at least be admitted to form as momentous a subject of investigation and reflexion, as ever was presented to the human mind.

# LETTER XIX.

*Examination of the cauſes of the decline of Poland.—State of that country at the time of John Sobieſki's death.—Change in the poſition of Europe at the deceaſe of Auguſtus the Third.—Conſequences of the death of the Empreſs Elizabeth of Ruſſia.—Origin of the plan for the partition of Poland.—Developement and progreſs of that great event.—Interview of Neuſtadt in Moravia.—Accompliſhment of the partition.—Its comparative advantages to Ruſſia, Auſtria, and Pruſſia.—Probable deſtiny of Poland.—Internal and moral cauſes of its deſtruction.—Picture of the Nobility.—Middle orders.—Peaſants.*

WARSAW, *July* 3d, 1778.

WHOEVER conſiders the ſtate of Poland, and reflects on the nature of its government, will perceive, that while the ſurrounding Powers of the continent have been in a conſtant ſtate of improvement or progreſſion

greſſion civil and military, for near a century paſt, the Poles alone have been ſtationary. At the death of John Sobieſki, hardly more than eighty years ago, the Swedes and the Turks were the only formidable enemies of the Republic. Ruſſia, under Peter the Great, was only juſt emerging from barbariſm, and ſcarcely become a member of the European ſyſtem. The Houſe of Brandenburg inſpired little apprehenſion, and had not then attained beyond the electoral dignity. As Dukes of Pruſſia, they had for ages been feudatories of Poland; while Auſtria, preſſed on one ſide by the Porte, and on the other by the arms of Louis the Fourteenth, could ſcarcely reſiſt the attacks of two ſuch powerful antagoniſts. To the perſonal aſſiſtance and valor of Sobieſki, at the head of a Poliſh army, the Emperor Leopold had been recently indebted for his preſervation, when driven from his capital by the Ottoman forces. The immenſe ſtanding armies of modern times were then comparatively unknown; and Poland, under all the

the defects of its government political and civil, might ſtill repel invaſion, or maintain its independence.

But in the interval of near ſeventy years, which elapſed between the deceaſe of John Sobieſki and that of the late King Auguſtus the Third, the face of Europe had totally changed. The Swedes, after repeatedly over-running and ſubjugating Poland; driven back by the Czar Peter, beyond the Baltic, no longer maintained any political relations, except thoſe merely of amity, with the Poliſh Crown and Republic: while the Turkiſh Empire, declining annually in ſtrength, could neither extend to them effectual aid, nor inflict on them material injury. Other powers had ariſen to ſupply the place of Sweden and Turkey. In October 1763, when the Saxon Line of Poliſh Sovereigns became extinct, Ruſſia, by the permanent conqueſt of Livonia, by her influence in Courland, and by her prodigious military force, might be ſaid to have acquired a domineering and almoſt irreſiſtible aſcendancy

ancy in the affairs of Poland. Thirty years earlier, in 1733, at the death of Auguſtus the Second, the Empreſs Anne had been able to raiſe that Prince's ſon to the throne, and to maintain him in it againſt all the efforts of France, aided by a party among the Poles themſelves. Elizabeth, her ſucceſſor, followed the ſame line of policy. Pruſſia, after a war of ſeven years, ſuſtained under circumſtances of unparalleled inequality, had by a ſort of miracle extricated herſelf, and was likewiſe become a Power of the firſt conſideration. The talents of Frederic, his victories, and his ambition, rendered the Pruſſian monarchy peculiarly an object of attention, if not of terror. Laſtly, Maria Thereſa, though foiled in her attempt to recover Sileſia, poſſeſſed nevertheleſs immenſe reſources; and might, from her poſition, have a great influence on the deſtiny of Poland, either as an ally, or as an enemy.

At the time when the throne became vacant by the deceaſe of Auguſtus the Third, the three great Powers above mentioned

tioned retained under their command a regular, difciplined, military force, amounting together to above four hundred and fifty thoufand men. On the contrary, the Polifh army, if it could properly be fo termed, confifted rather in the prerogative with which the conftitution vefted the King, of calling out and arming the Nobility, if emergency required, than in any effective body of foldiery, paid, clothed, and maintained by the ftate. It is indeed palpable that if Ruffia, Auftria, and Pruffia, had chofen to difmember and divide Poland in 1763, as they did nine years later in 1772, no internal or effectual oppofition could have been made by the Republic, which would have finally prevented the partition of its territories among thofe powers. The intractability, want of forefight, and infatuation of the Polifh Grandees, who would fee no object of jealoufy except their own Sovereign, and who would take no precaution againft external attack, left them at the mercy of any foreign combination.

While the Saxon Kings continued to reign, theſe evils were nevertheleſs retarded and averted. They maintained themſelves on the venal throne which they had originally purchaſed, by foreign alliances of marriage, conſanguinity, and policy. If Elizabeth, Empreſs of Ruſſia, had ſurvived Auguſtus the Third, there is no doubt that the deſtiny of the north of Europe would have been totally changed. The Saxon Princes would probably ſtill have governed Poland; and that country would have retained its ancient limits: while on the contrary Pruſſia would have inevitably been, if not diſmembered and divided, at leaſt conſiderably reduced in territory, revenue, and political importance. Elizabeth had given public proofs of her reſolution to ſupport Auguſtus and his deſcendants on the throne of Poland. She had even raiſed one of his younger ſons, Prince Charles of Saxony, to the Dukedom of Courland, as an earneſt of her future exertions in favour of his Houſe. But the late King of Poland

had the misfortune to outlive his ally and benefactress just one and twenty months: Elizabeth expired in January 1762; and her death was the era from which we may date the destruction of Poland as an European State. The reign of Peter, short and tragical, was succeeded by that of Catharine. It was evident, from the age and infirmities of Augustus the Third, that the Polish crown must soon become vacant. If his son, the Electoral Prince, should be chosen in his room, the Saxon Family could no longer be considered as elective, but in effect as hereditary; and all attempts to make a partition of Poland would be ineffectual. The Peace of Hubertsburg, recently concluded, left his Prussian Majesty at liberty to turn his principal views and efforts towards Warsaw. He well knew that the time was critical, and that every thing depended on the choice of a successor after Augustus's decease.

Such were the circumstances in which was conceived the project of the partition

 of

of Poland. I will relate from high and concurring teſtimonies, what I have collected relative to it, at Peterſburgh, Vienna, Berlin, and finally during my ſtay in this capital.

The plan unqueſtionably originated in the Cabinet of Pruſſia; but not with the King, nor with any of his miniſters. His brother Prince Henry's deep and capacious mind is ſaid to have firſt ſeized, digeſted, and ripened the plan in ſilence. When he communicated his ideas on the ſubject to Frederic, that Monarch, while he expreſſed his admiration of it in theory, conſidered it as impracticable, and as oppoſed by too many obſtacles ever to be realized. Prince Henry on the other hand contended, that by the aid of time, judicious concealment, and dexterous management, the partition might be finally effected. He brought over the King to his opinion; and they began in concert the train of meaſures requiſite for its completion. The firſt ſtep taken, was artfully to flatter the new Empreſs of Ruſſia,

to

to awaken her vanity, and to reprefent to her the honour, as well as the advantage, of giving a Sovereign to Poland, after having placed herfelf on the throne of the Czars. Catharine liftened with complacency to fuggeftions fo well calculated to make impreffion on a mind like hers, anxious for every fpecies of glory. Impelled by her partiality for Count Poniatowfki, and probably likewife induced by her perfect knowledge of his character, fhe fignified to Frederic her intention of elevating that Nobleman to the crown. The choice being approved at Berlin, on the deceafe of Auguftus, Catharine's forces and treafures overcame all oppofition. Staniflaus was elected by violence; while the Ruffian embaffador, Prince Repnin, as the delegate and reprefentative of the Emprefs, became in fact the defpot and the oppreffor of the Poles. The unfortunate King, who retained little more of royalty than the name, was only an engine in the hands of the Court of Peterfburgh.

Frederic, attentive to the accomplifhment of his primary objects, and who by no means intended that Poland fhould fink virtually into a Ruffian province, next fomented the difcontents of the great Polifh Nobility. By means of his emiffaries, he fecretly ftimulated them to throw off fo ignominious a yoke, and to dethrone a prince illegally elected, as well as unable to afford them protection againft the tyranny of Catharine. His infinuations were fuccefsful; confederations were formed in various provinces, and Poland foon became a theatre of civil war, of infurrection, and devaftation. In order to maintain Staniflaus on the throne, Mufcovites and Coffacks were quartered in all the principal cities; while Warfaw refembled rather a Ruffian garrifon, then the capital of an independent Republic. It was not difficult for Frederic to excite the jealoufy of the Turks at fuch an interference; and to reprefent to them, that under pretence of reducing the Polifh rebels to obedience, Catharine in effect rendered

dered the country a province of her Empire. At the ſame time he encouraged and exhorted the Court of Peterſburgh to engage in hoſtilities with the Porte. No exertions were omitted in order to inflame the two Sovereigns and Governments, already irritated againſt each other. War enſued between them, and was proſecuted with various ſucceſs, in Aſia as well as in Europe.

The object to which his policy had ſo long tended was now in ſome meaſure attained. Frederic having completely embroiled the Ruſſians and Turks, at the ſame time that the Poles, exhauſted by confederacies, added to the ravages of the plague, were incapable of reſiſtance, turned his attention next to the Court of Vienna. Nothing could be effected without the Auſtrian conſent and co-operation. With a view of ſtudying the character of Joſeph the Second, he therefore artfully cauſed a propoſition to be made on his part for an interview between them. The Emperor accepted it; and the two Princes met at Neiſs in Sileſia, towards the end of Auguſt 1769. But, though the ſtate

of Poland might there have been mentioned in general terms, it is certain that no plan or treaty for a partition of it took place. Whether matters were not then sufficiently ripe, or that Frederic perceived other obstacles to its immediate completion, it was not till the following autumn, in 1770, that after previously sounding the Imperial Cabinet, the subject was fully discussed in the second interview of Frederic and Joseph, at Neustadt in Moravia. Prince Kaunitz accompanied the Emperor thither for the express purpose. His Prussian Majesty, who knew that without the Minister's approbation, he could not overcome the scruples of Maria Theresa, religious as well as political, exerted all his address to win the Prince. At the opera which was performed at Neustadt, Frederic constantly placed him by his side, took snuff out of his box, and affected for him the most distinguishing consideration. Joseph, young, ambitious, and eager to extend the dominions of the House of Austria, was not difficult to be persuaded. It may more naturally excite our astonish-

ment,

ment, that a Minifter fuch as Prince Kaunitz allowed himfelf to be convinced either of the policy, or of the neceffity of the meafure. As little can we conceive how fo pious and circumfpect a Princefs as Maria Therefa could have been induced to lend her aid to a meafure fo repugnant to every principle of juftice or rectitude. Such, however, was the fact. Frederic and Jofeph fpread before them the map of Poland, agreed on their refpective fhares, and fixed on the tract of country to be offered to the Emprefs of Ruffia, as her portion. Thefe preliminaries being adjufted, the two Sovereigns parted.

In the courfe of the enfuing year appeared the fruits of the interview. By command of their refpective Courts, the Auftrian and Pruffian embaffadors at Peterfburgh fignified to Catharine the determination of the Cabinets of Berlin and Vienna. They added at the fame time, that the refolution was definitively taken on the part of thofe Sovereigns, at all events to feize on the pro-

vinces

vinces respectively allotted them: and it was plainly insinuated, that if she would not consent, or chose to reject her portion of the spoil, they knew how to compel her to it by force. The Empress, thus threatened and assailed, made the strongest remonstrances to Maria Theresa and her Ministers, whom she endeavoured to convince that they were over-reached by Frederic. But finding them impervious to arguments, and inflexible in their determination, and being engaged in a war with the Porte which occupied all her forces, while it drained her treasury, Catherine had no alternative left except acquiescence. After a proper delay therefore, necessary in order to prepare manifestos, the armies of the three Powers, which had previously approached the frontiers of Poland, marched into the country, and sequestered the territories respectively allotted to them. They then compelled the unfortunate Stanislaus to convoke a Diet, in which he ratified his own degradation, and that of his subjects, by

giving to their usurpations the mock sanction of legislative and deliberative consent.

After having viewed the springs, and followed the movements of this extraordinary transaction, which is without precedent in modern history, it is natural to ask, Which of the three Sovereigns has been the greatest gainer by the division? No doubt whatsoever can be entertained on the point, by such as have examined or inquired with impartiality. Unquestionably it was not Catharine, since she might be considered as already mistress of all Poland. Her troops and her embassador gave laws in Warsaw equally to the King and to the Republic. The Duchy of Courland was not more subjected, or more dependent on her orders. Every motive of policy dictated to her, not to aggrandize two powerful European states her neighbours, at the expence of Poland. The portion which has been assigned to her, is indeed a fertile, extensive, and important tract of country, contiguous to her own dominions on the west, and including a

great

great part of Lithuania, as well as Polifh Livonia: but, comparatively eftimated, it adds little to her revenues, power, or political confideration.

The Auftrian fhare, locally as well as financially confidered, is indeed more valuable. By its pofition it covers Hungary and Moravia, while it extends the Imperial frontier on that fide, far beyond the Carpathian Mountains, to the diftant confines of Podolia and Moldavia. The mines of Vielicza, which may enable the Emprefs Queen to fupply all Poland with falt, form a confiderable permanent fource of revenue; and the population cannot be eftimated in thofe provinces, at a fmaller number than two millions.

But thefe advantages, great as they muft be feparately allowed in themfelves, fink on a comparifon with the political benefits derived to Pruffia from the partition of Poland. Even Silefia, on the conqueft of which Frederic naturally prides himfelf, was not, in my eftimate, fo vaft or fo folid an acquifi-

tion

tion to the Monarchy as Polish Prussia. It suffices to look at its geographical position, in order to be convinced of the fact in all its force. Though less in mere extent than the Austrian and Russian shares, it far exceeds them in fertility of soil, in the number of cities, industry, and faculties of raising pecuniary supplies. Not only the Vistula, from the gates of Thorn to those of Dantzic, together with the whole commerce of that river, are become Prussian. The circumstance which renders them inestimable to Frederic, is, that he has joined his electoral dominions of Brandenburg and the Duchy of Pomerania, to his kingdom of Prussia. They were previously dissevered by a tract of country which incapacitated them in a great degree from lending mutual succours, when invaded by a foreign enemy; especially by a Russian. He may now be said to have almost realized the "Regnum Balticum," without shedding a drop of blood; and he stretches in an uninterrupted line, from the mouths of the

Oder

Oder, along the fouthern fhore of the Baltic, to the frontiers of Courland and Samogitia.

Its future effects on Europe are incalculable. Catharine may continue to dictate her pleafure in the city of Warfaw; but Frederic, by holding the Viftula in his poffeffion, retains the keys of Poland, and can prevent the importation or exportation of almoft every article of trade. Dantzic and Thorn, whatever refiftance they may make, muft, fooner or later, become a part of his dominions. The Cabinet of Vienna will one day perceive, that in confenting to the partition of Poland they violated not lefs the laws of true policy, than thofe of morality and juftice. They were in fact over-reached by his Pruffian Majefty at the interview of Neuftadt, notwithftanding the fpecious advantages with which he dazzled Jofeph, and deluded Prince Kaunitz. Probably they are already fenfible, when too late, of their error; and would gladly reftore their own portion of the plunder, if

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it were poſſible to reduce Frederic to his former ſituation.

The final deſtiny of this diſmembered and impoveriſhed country forms a curious and intereſting ſubject of political inquiry, doubt, and ſpeculation. Will the Crown of Poland and the Republic long continue to exiſt even in name? Will the Family of Poniatowſki be rendered hereditary? May not circumſtances poſſibly ariſe, that ſhall again reſtore to Poland her raviſhed provinces? Or may not her total deſtruction as an independent power, and the incorporation of her remaining territory with the three great ſurrounding monarchies be an event neither diſtant nor improbable? Theſe diſcuſſions would lead me too far; and on one of them I may have occaſion to ſay ſomething when I ſpeak of the King, and his nephew Prince Staniſlaus. If however appearances may be truſted, there is ſtrong reaſon to believe, that the final diſſolution of Poland cannot be very remote; though the preciſe time muſt naturally be accelerated

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or retarded by a variety of circumſtances. Even the Poles themſelves foreſee it as inevitable, and admit that in the wretched condition of their country, it is a conſummation rather to be deſired than deprecated by every individual.

In addition to the radical defects of the conſtitution, which irreſiſtibly operated to ſink Poland below the level of the neighbouring ſtates, and to deprive it of the means of reſiſtance againſt foreign violence; the moral principles of its diſſolution are ſo numerous, as to leave little hope of remedy or of reſuſcitation. The great Nobility are depraved, corrupt, and deſtitute of enlightened patriotiſm: their education and habits extinguiſh every ſpark of public virtue. In their infancy they are ſurrounded by domeſtics or preceptors, who nouriſh thoſe fatal prejudices and ideas of ſuperiority ſo calculated to harden the human heart. Even while in their cradles, the peaſants are brought to kiſs their feet, and to ſhew them marks of homage. They are

taught

taught to regard their vaſſals as creatures of a ſeparate ſpecies. On the other hand, they are not brought up in principles of obedience to the laws, or of deference to the Sovereign and to the civil Magiſtrate. How can they be ſo, in a country where the courts of juſtice are corrupt, mercenary, and venal beyond imagination; where the Crown, at the death of every Sovereign, is either bought, or transferred by violence; and where the punishment of crimes is almoſt unknown! Aſſaſſinations, robberies, frauds, divorces on the moſt frivolous pretences, invaſions of property, and a rage for play which knows no limits; theſe infractions of public and private order are committed with impunity among the higher claſſes. A total diſſolution of morals is the inevitable conſequence. Even the ſenſe of ſhame, and dread of infamy, anterior and ſuperior to all written law, ſeem here to have loſt much of their force, and ſcarcely to operate as reſtraints.

If ſuch be the ſtate of the upper orders, no reſource is to be found in the people. The very term is inapplicable; for there is in fact *no Poliſh People*. Never was the title of *Republic* ſo abuſed and proſtituted; as well might the name be applied to Algiers or to Tunis. Of the intermediate rank of citizens, merchants, artizans, and mechanics, the number is ſo ſmall and inconſiderable, that they may be regarded as non-exiſtent to any beneficial purpoſe. In a country where commerce is in a manner extinct; manufactures, except thoſe of the firſt neceſſity, nearly unknown; induſtry diſcouraged; arts unprotected; and only the cultivation of the ground that can be conſidered as in any degree flouriſhing; the middle claſs of men muſt neceſſarily diminiſh, and be of no account. The peaſants are indeed a numerous body, though much reduced by ſucceſſive years of anarchy, famine, and calamity: but they remain in the ſame ſtate of poverty, vaſſalage, and ignorance, which has been their invariable

lot during many ages. Attached to the glebe, and sold with it, they are equally strangers to the name and to the possession of freedom. Inured to domestic servitude, it may even be questioned whether they are capable of receiving such a present, except by insensible gradations. A considerable lapse of time, the introduction of arts, and the general diffusion of knowledge, could alone render them able to improve the blessings of civil liberty, or elevate them to the rank of subjects, from the condition of slaves. Such a change is, I fear, beyond either hope or calculation; and whatever may be the final destiny of this unfortunate country, the greater part of its inhabitants will probably continue to exist in nearly the same state of political and personal degradation. Here I shall finish this letter, and remain, &c.

## LETTER XX.

*Origin and hiſtory of the family of Poniatowſki.—Anecdotes of the father of Staniſlaus Auguſtus.—Particulars of the life of Count Poniatowſki, previous to his election to the crown of Poland.—His elevation to the throne.—His conduct in the beginning of his reign.—Luxury, pleaſures, and profuſion of the court. Miſerable ſtate of Poland.—Account of the attempt to aſſaſſinate Staniſlaus, and his eſcape.—Puniſhment of the conſpirators.—Conduct of the King on the partition of Poland.—Character, perſonal qualities, defects, and anecdotes of Staniſlaus.—His private life.—Family—Uncertainty of his future deſtiny.*

WARSAW, *July* 17th, 1778.

AFTER having traced the principal cauſes which led to the partition of Poland, and endeavoured to inveſtigate its conſequences, immediate as well as remote, it is natural to turn our regards towards the King. As an elective ſovereign, without queen

queen or deſcendants, he ſtands alone; and in whatever point of view we conſider him, he is an object of no common intereſt. Raiſed from the condition of a private nobleman or gentleman, to a throne, maintained in it by foreign ſupport, eſcaped by a ſort of miracle from the hands of aſſaſſins, and ſtill nominally the head of a diſmembered and expiring monarchy; all the incidents of his hiſtory awaken attention. His amiable perſonal qualities, the precarious nature of his preſent elevated ſituation, and the uncertainty of his future deſtiny, excite regard and curioſity blended with anxiety and compaſſion. Never in fact was any prince leſs an object of envy. I have had opportunities of ſeeing him, and of forming ſome opinion of his character from my perſonal obſervation: but it is from much higher ſources of information that I ſhall ſpeak of Staniſlaus: they have been ſo ample, as rather to leave me under an embarraſſment what to conceal, than what to diſ-

close. Before I mention him perſonally, it may not be improper to ſay ſomething of his deſcent, and of his connexions.

The family of Poniatowſki is noble, and conſequently like that of every "Stolnick," or private gentleman, is eligible to the crown; neither commerce nor even ſervitude diſqualifying for the elevation. On the day when Staniſlaus was choſen King, Mr. Wroughton, the Engliſh miniſter at Warſaw, was ſtruck with ſurpriſe at ſeeing his butler buckle on a ſabre, and without aſking his permiſſion, walk out to the "Szopa." This ſpot is the place where the ceremony of electing the Poliſh ſovereigns is performed, about half an Engliſh mile diſtant from the capital. "Sir," ſaid the man to him, by way of apology for his conduct, "I am "noble; and though I act in the capacity "of one of your domeſtics, I am not leſs "competent to be raiſed to the throne, "than the firſt nobleman in the republic." In effect, the preſent King's deſcent on the paternal

paternal ſide is by no means illuſtrious. It is well atteſted, and univerſally acknowledged, that his grandfather, who was very poor, poſſeſſed ſcarcely any hereditary patrimony. Far from arriving at, or aſpiring to any public honours and dignities, he acted in the humble capacity of an overſeer or ſteward.

His ſon, the late Count Poniatowſki, who firſt raiſed the family from obſcurity, was not only a very diſtinguiſhed and celebrated perſon, uncommonly graceful in his figure, but endowed with great qualities of mind. When young, he married a noble lady of high extraction, the Counteſs Oginſka, though the marriage was never avowed, nor was ſhe known in the world by any other name than that of Oginſka. He afterwards, in the beginning of the preſent century, became colonel of the Swediſh guards of Staniſlaus Leczinſki, King of Poland; accompanied Charles the Twelfth at the unfortunate battle of Pultowa; and eminently contributed to ſave that monarch, after

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the action, from falling into the hands of the Czar Peter, by his perſonal exertions, which Voltaire has commemorated and immortalized. On his return from Bender to his native country, Poniatowſki, about the year 1720, eſpouſed the Princeſs Conſtantia Czartoriſki, ſiſter to the preſent Prince of that name. Though ſhe brought him only an inconſiderable fortune in marriage, and was little favoured by nature in the article of perſonal beauty, yet the alliance with ſo powerful and opulent a family as Czartoriſki, contributed much to his elevation. After having taken no mean part in the adminiſtration of Poland, during the two reigns of Auguſtus the Second and Third, under whom he filled ſome of the higheſt offices of State, he died about twenty years ago, at an advanced age, in eminent reputation for his talents and virtues.

Of four ſons whom he left behind him by the Princeſs Czartoriſki, his preſent Majeſty, Staniſlaus Auguſtus, is the ſecond. In the ſpring of the year 1757, when juſt

twenty-five

twenty-five years old, the intereſt of his family procured him from the late King of Poland, an appointment to the court of Peterſburgh in a public capacity. He was not indeed ſent thither as envoy from the Crown and Republic; but as the Miniſter of Auguſtus excluſively to the Empreſs Elizabeth, in which quality he took an oath before his departure, to ſupport and maintain the intereſts of the Saxon family. They afterwards complained loudly of his breach of faith and honour, when they diſcovered that inſtead of endeavouring to perpetuate the Poliſh crown in Auguſtus's line, which was the great object of his miſſion; he had, by his political intrigues with the Great Ducheſs Catherine laid the foundations of his own future exaltation to that high dignity.

Previous to his ſetting out for Ruſſia, he obtained, not without difficulty, after much ſolicitation on the part of himſelf and his friends, the riband of the "White Eagle," then the only order of Knighthood exiſting

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in Poland. A very ſingular circumſtance took place at his inveſtiture, the notoriety of which leaves no doubt of its truth, and which every perſon in Warſaw with whom I ever converſed on the ſubject, is ready to confirm. When the Sovereign confers the order, it is cuſtomary with the riband to preſent likewiſe the ſtar, round which is embroidered the device. The motto of *the King*, is different from that of *the ſubject*; the former being,

" Pro fide, *Grege*, lege;"

whereas the knights wear it,

" Pro fide, *Rege*, lege."

By an accident which never happened before, inſtead of a ſtar bearing the device as worn by the ſubject, a royal ſtar had been given to Count Poniatowſki. The miſtake was not immediately diſcovered; but when it reached Count Bruhl, the firſt miniſter of

of Auguſtus, he inſtantly redemanded the inſignia of the order, as having been inadvertently conferred, and they were of courſe reſtored. The affair excited much remark at the time; and when Staniſlaus afterwards aſcended the throne, it was recollected, and conſidered as an omen of his future fortune.

Count Poniatowſki, on his arrival at Peterſburgh, ſoon became perſonally acceptable to the Great Ducheſs Catharine, who then led a retired life in the court of Elizabeth, by whom ſhe was not beloved. That the connexion between her and Staniſlaus was of the cloſeſt and tendereſt nature, no doubt can be entertained. Even at this hour, the King, when he ſpeaks of the Empreſs to thoſe with whom he is unreſerved, mentions her as an object of his warmeſt attachment as a woman, not leſs than of his admiration and reſpect as a Sovereign. How far, during the period to which I allude, ſhe might have given him hopes or aſſurances of her ſupport in placing him on the Throne,

whenever

whenever the crown of Poland ſhould become vacant, it is difficult to ſay with preciſion. Any ſuch promiſes however, if made, could only have been contingent, vague, and almoſt viſionary; ſince her own excluſive elevation to the throne of Ruſſia was then apparently by no means a probable event. Yet, that ſhe did hold out to him ſuch proſpects, is univerſally believed and aſſerted here. She doubtleſs ſaw that Elizabeth, who ſenſibly declined in health, might not long continue to reign. The weakneſs and incapacity of her huſband Peter, and ſtill more his imprudence, or contempt of the Ruſſians, ſhe was likewiſe aware, would probably open a way for herſelf to the ſupreme power. Auguſtus the Third was ſinking in years; and at his death the Ruſſians muſt neceſſarily have the preponderating influence at Warſaw, in naming a ſucceſſor, as they had done at the deceaſe of his father, in 1733. Under theſe circumſtances ſhe certainly might, and ſhe probably did aſſure him of
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her exertions in his favor, if Fortune ſhould enable her to afford him effectual aſſiſtance.

So convinced were the Saxon Miniſters of Staniſlaus's carrying on ſome ſecret negotiations or projects in concert with the Great Ducheſs, to the prejudice of Auguſtus's intereſt, that they recalled him from Peterſburgh. Prince Charles of Saxony then reſided in the court of Elizabeth, by whom he was much cheriſhed and protected. Catharine, inconſolable at the intelligence of her favorite's recall, condeſcended to apply to the Prince, and beſought his interpoſition with the King his father, to allow Poniatowſki's continuance in Ruſſia. He, who was then in high favor with the Empreſs, and had been recently raiſed by her to the dignity of Duke of Courland, refuſed to gratify the Great Ducheſs, or to interfere in favor of her lover. Staniſlaus, after many vain efforts to prolong his ſtay, reluctantly quitted Peterſburgh; but Catharine never forgave the rejection of her requeſt,

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and ſeverely revenged it in the ſequel on the Houſe of Saxony.

After the deceaſe of Elizabeth, Peter the Third, during his ſhort reign, extended his views to Poland. He had even deſtined the crown, whenever it ſhould become vacant, for Prince Adam Czartoriſki, couſin by the maternal ſide to Staniſlaus; a young nobleman, who from his deſcent, immenſe fortune, expectations, and alliances, might juſtly pretend to ſuch an elevation. But the ſudden depoſition of Peter in the ſame year, opened a new ſcene; and it was followed at no long interval, by the death of Auguſtus the Third, who expired at Dreſden in October, 1763. Catharine inſtantly turned her principal attention towards Warſaw. Eleven months of Interregnum elapſed before the vacant throne was filled; and her choice, however it might have been in reality fixed, long appeared to be doubtful. Various Poliſh noblemen were propoſed as candidates: but at length, Prince Repnin the

Ruſſian

Ruſſian ambaſſador named Staniſlaus, Count Poniatowſki, as the fortunate object of the Empreſs's ſelection. It is not my intention to enter upon this part of his ſtory, which is matter of hiſtorical publicity. Force having overruled the deliberations of the Diet, and ſilenced all oppoſition, Staniſlaus was declared King.

His election might be conſidered in fact as not more illegal than the three preceding ones; in each of which, Saxon, Swediſh, or Muſcovite troops, aided by gold, had raiſed the pretender whoſe cauſe they eſpouſed, to the throne of Poland. But in all former inſtances, the foreign interference was either immediately withdrawn; or at leaſt better concealed after the elevation of the ſucceſsful candidate, in whoſe behalf it had been employed. Catharine the Second did not imitate the moderation of her predeceſſor the Empreſs Anne, in this reſpect. Far from meaning to render Staniſlaus independent of her protection; on the contrary, ſhe clearly manifeſted her intention

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to retain him in her immediate dependence, and to govern Poland as a province, under the forms of a free Republic. Her troops, quartered in the vicinity of Warſaw, equally awed the Sovereign whom ſhe had created, and the nation which ſhe oppreſſed. Accuſtomed as the Poles had always been to external interference in the election of their kings, they were not broken down to ſlavery. Reſiſtance, confederations, inſurrections, and civil war under every form, laid waſte the country; while the King remained a paſſive or a helpleſs ſpectator of the multiplied calamities inflicted on his unfortunate ſubjects.

The firſt years of his reign, from 1764 to 1767, were nevertheleſs devoted almoſt entirely to pleaſure and diſſipation; a conduct the more culpable and cenſurable, as he had already paſſed the period of human life, at which the violence of the paſſions may be pleaded in excuſe. When crowned in November 1764, he wanted only two months of thirty-three years complete. Inſtead

ſtead of adopting meaſures which indicated any vigour of mind, and which might eventually lead to his emancipation, Staniſlaus confirmed his political chains, by manifeſting a diſpoſition at once yielding, indolent, and ſubmiſſive. No economy was obſerved in his expences, and no limits were affixed to his profuſion. Three parties, on his acceſſion, diſputed the government of the new monarch. At the head of the firſt were his two uncles, the Princes Czartoriſki, whoſe advanced age, high rank, and character, ſeemed to point them out as the proper adviſers and conductors of their nephew. They did in fact enjoy for ſome time, a conſiderable degree of power and influence. The ſecond faction conſiſted of his Majeſty's three brothers; the Great Chamberlain, the General, and the Abbé, now Biſhop of Ploczko. The third party was compoſed of the ladies of the court, among whom the principal figure was the Princeſs Lubomirſka, daughter to Prince Czartoriſki. Her perſonal attractions, accompliſhments, and in-
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timate connexion with the King her coufin, gave her an afcendancy over him, which did not tend to raife him in the public eftimation.

While clouds were collecting on every fide; regardlefs of futurity, he paffed the greater part of his time among women, occupied in purfuits of gallantry, in puerile amufements, or in luxurious exhibitions of tafte and magnificence. Far from acquiring in his character of a Sovereign, the efteem of his fubjects, he did not even retain the good opinion of the Emprefs; who, it is evident, well knew how to appreciate the qualities and talents of her former lover. When Count Rzewufki, who is now "Marechal de la Cour," was at Peterfburgh fome years ago, Catharine converfing with him on the fubject of Staniflaus, "Le Roi mon "maitre," faid Rzewufki, "prend Henri "Quatre pour fon modele."—"Apparem- "ment," anfwered the Emprefs, "ce n'eft "que dans les foibleffes qu'il veut imiter le "Roi de France."

If the prefent King had poffeffed a ftrong and vigorous mind; if to econony he had added policy, decifion, and energy of character; it is probable that Poland might have been preferved from total ruin. But, had he been caft in fuch a mould, Catharine, inftead of placing him on the throne, would doubtlefs have fedulouflv excluded him from it. An obvious means of ftrengthening and fupporting himfelf againft the Ruffian tyranny, was by contracting a foreign matrimonial alliance. Its expediency was ftrongly inculcated by his real friends, who urged him to open a negotiation for the purpofe; and it is with reafon believed that he might have obtained the hand of a princefs of Saxony. Such a connexion would perhaps have tended eventually to conciliate, as well as to attach, the Cabinet of Vienna, without whofe approbation and participation, the difmemberment of the kingdom which we have witneffed, could not have taken place. But Staniflaus, whatever were his motives, never would be in-

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duced to make the requisite demand to the Court of Dresden. He was unquestionably dissuaded from it by the ladies who surrounded him, and who dreaded the extinction of their influence on the arrival of a foreign queen. There is not any probability that he will now ever be married; nor if he were so, that it could have any political consequences. The destiny of Poland is irrevocably decided.

Entertainments of the most studied luxury, comedies, operas, and all the diversions of an effeminate or dissolute court, occupied every moment, and seemed to leave him no time for any serious business. These spectacles emptied the royal coffers, and plunged the King, though his revenue was ample, into a state of poverty. Many of them cost very considerable sums, and in taste might vie with the most splendid exhibitions of the last or present century. The courtiers in their turn gave similar entertainments for the amusement of the Sovereign. A grandson of Augustus the Second,

cond, Count Mofzinfki, (with whofe mother I am well acquainted at Drefden) was conftituted at once favourite, minifter, and director of the royal pleafures. He poffeffed great delicacy of fancy; his prodigality in the indulgence of it, knew no bounds; and after having expended his whole fortune in a fhort time, he now fubfifts wholly on the bounty of Staniflaus. In one of the fuperb fêtes given by Mofzinfki to his royal mafter, there feems to have been combined every variety, which an elegant imagination could invent or affemble. Mr. Wroughton, who was prefent at moft or all of thefe entertainments, favoured me with a defcription of the one in queftion, which I fhall repeat, as it will convey to you fome idea of Polifh manners and magnificence.

It took place in fummer, and confifted of fixty perfons; thirty of each fex. After a fumptuous repaft, a comedy was performed in a building conftructed exprefsly for the occafion. The whole company, habited in fancy dreffes, next embarked in barges on

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the Viſtula, attended by bands of muſic. An iſland, fortified and defended by women in the dreſs of Amazons, the Queen Hyppolita at their head, having preſented itſelf to the view, a mock combat enſued, in which the King was the principal aſſailant. They did not however make a long, or an obſtinate reſiſtance; and Hyppolita, followed by her female train, laid their ſpears at the feet of the royal Theſeus; for whoſe diverſion they then exhibited an opera. A ſupper and a ball ſucceeded: while on other iſlands in the ſtream of the Viſtula, were diſplayed fire-works and illuminations. It muſt be admitted that nothing more claſſically elegant could have been given by the Princes of the Houſe of Medicis, at Piſa, or at Florence. But ſuch coſtly amuſements were ill ſuited to Staniſlaus's pecuniary reſources. The expence of the evening did not fall ſhort of near ſix thouſand pounds ſterling; and in the courſe of one year, the King laid out about forty-five thouſand pounds in theatrical or muſical exhibitions.

Mr. Wroughton, who had known Staniſlaus in a private ſtation as Count Poniatowſki, and had always lived with him on terms of the moſt intimate familiarity, beheld with regret his profuſion, and determined to remonſtrate with him. Uſing the freedom of an old and faithful friend, he ventured to repreſent to his Majeſty the imprudence of ſuch expence, which while it impoveriſhed himſelf, obliged no one. The King, far from being offended, liſtened with attention; but attempted to juſtify it as political, ſince it tended to render him popular, by conciliating the affections of his ſubjects. "I imitate," ſaid he, "my great predeceſ-"ſor Auguſtus the Second, one of the moſt "amiable of princes, who diſplayed the "ſame profuſion from ſimilar motives." It was in vain that the Engliſh Miniſter endeavoured to convince him how ill the precedent applied: Staniſlaus continued incorrigible. He laviſhed immenſe ſums at the ſame time, in conſtructing a palace at Ujaſdow, which I went to ſee ſome days ago, and which exhibits at this moment a

ſtriking monument of folly and podigality. Ujaſdow ſtands on a hill, about three quarters of a mile from Warſaw, and was begun by Auguſtus the Second; at whoſe deceaſe it fell to a Prince of the Lubomirſki family, from whom it was purchaſed by Staniſlaus. However incredible it may appear, there is no doubt that he has expended above two hundred thouſand pounds on the edifice. It is a prodigious pile of building, reſembling more a convent than a palace, unfiniſhed, ruinous, and will probably remain for ever uninhabited.

In the midſt of theſe occupations, if ſuch they can be deemed, Poland became a ſcene of mortality, inſurrection, and carnage. Many thouſand perſons were carried off by the plague. The confederate nobles, who maintained the illegality of the King's election, endeavoured at once to depoſe him, and to expel their oppreſſors the Ruſſians. Saxony furniſhed them with pecuniary ſupplies; while the plunder of ſuch provinces or towns as refuſed to join them, contributed to ſupport their troops. The cabinet of Berlin

Berlin fanned the flames, at the same time that France and Austria extended to the insurgents indirect assistance in men or in money. But, though embarrassed by the war in which she was engaged with the Turks, Catharine nevertheless repressed the Poles, cut in pieces their confederacies, and asserted her superiority. To so wretched a state was the country reduced, that Stanislaus hardly esteemed himself safe even in Warsaw; and at the distance of a league from the metropolis in every direction, had he ventured so far, he would have been carried off by the rebels. Thus a prisoner in his own capital, his situation was, it must be owned, at once the most helpless and the most humiliating: he owed his crown solely to the Russians, and a murmur on his part against their excesses, might precipitate him from the eminence to which they had raised him. Even his remonstrances to them against the outrages which they committed, were treated with disregard, or heard with indifference.

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On the other hand, no reſource preſented itſelf to Staniſlaus, in the affection or loyalty of his ſubjects. To the confederates, as they denied his title, and deteſted his perſon, he could not fly for refuge. Such was their antipathy to him, that they reſolved to put him to death, as the primary author of the calamities of his country, and as a man wholly dependent on Catharine the Second, their enemy and their tyrant. They executed their purpoſe in part, with aſtoniſhing audacity and ſucceſs; though it is difficult to conceive what benefit could have accrued to them, or to Poland, from the deſtruction of Staniſlaus, if it had been effected. The Empreſs would eaſily have ſubſtituted in his place another phantom of royalty, had ſuch a one been requiſite; and her victorious forces would not leſs have ſuppreſſed every effort on their part at national emancipation. The attempt to aſſaſſinate the King, was in itſelf an event ſo extraordinary, and all the circumſtances

attending it are ſo incredible, but at the ſame time ſo characteriſtic of the nation, that I ſhall give it in detail from indiſputable authorities.

Pulawſki, a Poliſh nobleman, who commanded one of the many bodies of the confederate troops, by which the country was then ravaged and deſolated, firſt ſet on foot the enterpriſe to aſſaſſinate Staniſlaus. He is acknowledged by the Ruſſians themſelves, to have been a leader of eminent military talents, which he diſplayed on a variety of occaſions. Having choſen three chiefs for conducting the attempt, named Lukawſki, Strawinſki, and Koſinſki, he allowed them to ſelect thirty-ſeven other aſſociates for its execution, the whole band being about forty in number. Willing to add the ſolemnity of a religious obligation to the motives of intereſt, the enthuſiaſm of party ſpirit, and the hopes of reward; Pulawſki made the three chiefs take an oath, their hands joined between his, either to deliver the King alive into his poſſeſſion,

or in caſe that ſhould be impoſſible, to put him to death. This ceremony took place at the town of Czeſtochow, in Great Poland. Durini, who is now Vice-legate at Avignon, and who was then the papal Nuncio at the Court of Warſaw, being at Czeſtochow, lent his ſanction to the enterpriſe. Inſtigated by furious zeal againſt the Diſſidents, whom he deteſted as heretics, and whom he believed to be protected by Staniſlaus, he even proceeded further, and beſtowed his benediction on the weapons delivered to the conſpirators for the purpoſe of aſſaſſinating their Sovereign. The preſent age ſcarcely can furniſh ſo ſtriking an inſtance of ſanguinary bigotry, which reſembles rather the ſpirit of the times of Catharine of Medicis, and Philip the Second, than the character of a period diſtinguiſhed for religious toleration, and almoſt indifference.

The conſpirators, thus doubly furniſhed with ſpiritual exhortation and temporal arms, left Czeſtochow, and ſet out for Warſaw.

ſaw. It was, however by no means eaſy to obtain entrance into the city, which, though not fortified, was ſurrounded with lines thrown up to prevent the introduction of the plague; and at different parts of which works, Ruſſian or Poliſh ſentinels were ſtationed. In order to ſurmount the impediment, they had therefore recourſe to ſtratagem. On the ſecond of November 1771, they diſguiſed themſelves as peaſants; their ſaddles, arms, and uniforms being concealed under the hay which they brought in waggons. The artifice completely ſucceeded; and as their numbers expoſed them every moment to diſcovery, it was determined not to poſtpone the execution of the attempt. Circumſtances particularly favourable, enabled them to proceed to action on the following night.

The King, upon that evening, Sunday, the third of November, had paid a viſit to his uncle, Prince Czartoriſki, grand chancellor of Lithuania. Between nine and ten o'clock he ſet out to return to the palace, which

which is not much more than a quarter of a mile diſtant, through the moſt frequented and populous ſtreets of Warſaw. The night was extremely dark, and as I have already obſerved, the capital of Poland has no lamps. Staniſlaus had in the coach with him an aide-du-camp of the name of Poniatowſki, a diſtant relation of his family; and about fifteen or ſixteen attendants accompanied the carriage, ſome of whom were armed with ſwords or ſabres. Scarcely had he proceeded two hundred paces from the hotel of Prince Czartoriſki, when the coach was ſurrounded by a band of men, who commanded the poſtillion to ſtop on pain of inſtant death. They, at the ſame time, fired a number of ſhots into the carriage, ſeveral of which paſſed through his Majeſty's fur cloak. I have examined it, and ſeen the holes made in it by the bullets, which ſufficiently atteſt the magnitude of the danger which he incurred. It ſeems almoſt miraculous that he ſhould have then eſcaped without a wound of any kind.

Among

Among the train of attendants who followed the coach, only one, a Heyduque, attempted to refift, or to defend his mafter. He was fhot in that gallant act, and expired next morning of the wound which he received. I ought not to omit that he was a proteftant, and that the King allows a penfion to his widow and family. But his example was not imitated by any other of the perfons prefent, who flying in different directions, abandoned their Sovereign to his fate. Even the aide-du-camp, who had the honour to be feated with Staniflaus in the carriage, and who bore the fame name, ignominioufly forfook him, and concealed himfelf from the rage of the affaffins, by taking fhelter under a little wooden bridge laid acrofs the gutter of the ftreet. He is become, as he merited, univerfally defpicable, and now lives obfcurely in Lithuania.

Meanwhile the King, who, to his honour, feems never to have loft his prefence of mind throughout the whole tranfaction, finding that

that he was left nearly alone in the midſt of the ruffians, opened the door of the carriage, with deſign to effect, if poſſible, his eſcape. The darkneſs of the night favoured the attempt, and he had already got out of the coach, when the aſſaſſins ſeized him by the hair, exclaiming in Poliſh, with horrible execrations, "We have thee now: thy "hour is come!" One of them diſcharged a piſtol at him ſo cloſe, that he felt the heat of the flaſh; while another cut him ſo ſeverely acroſs the head with his ſabre, that it penetrated to the ſkull. They then laid hold of his Majeſty by the collar, and two among them mounting on horſeback, dragged him along the ground between their horſes, at full gallop, for near five hundred paces, through the ſtreets of Warſaw. However wonderful it may appear, they met with no impediment or oppoſition. A Ruſſian ſentinel, at ſome diſtance from the place where they firſt ſtopped and ſeized the King, hearing a noiſe, called to them; but, as they anſwered, or pretended

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to anſwer in his own language, he allowed them to paſs without moleſtation, conceiving them to be a Ruſs patrole.

All was confuſion and diſorder during this time at the Royal Palace, where the ſcattered and terrified domeſtics had carried the alarm. The foot-guards ran immediately to the ſpot from whence Staniſlaus had been forced away; but, finding nothing except his hat all bloody, and the bag of his hair, they concluded that he was murdered. Throughout the capital, univerſal conſternation prevailed, and the conſpirators profited of the terror, to bear away their prize. Perceiving however, that he was not able to follow them longer on foot, and that he had already almoſt loſt his reſpiration, from the violence with which they had dragged him along, they ſet him on horſeback. They then redoubled their ſpeed, from the fear of being overtaken. Arriving at the ditch or lines drawn round Warſaw, they compelled him to leap his horſe acroſs, in performing which the animal

mal fell twice, and at the ſecond fall broke his leg. Regardleſs of the circumſtance, they immediately mounted his Majeſty on another, covered as he was with blood and dirt.

The principal difficulties attending the enterpriſe ſeemed now to be at an end, ſince they had got clear of the metropolis: but the darkneſs of the night, which had hitherto facilitated its ſucceſs, impeded its completion; and the precipitation of the chiefs, who, inſtead of terminating the buſineſs, as they might eaſily have done, were anxious to claim their reſpective ſhares of merit in its execution, finally extricated the King. No ſooner had he paſſed the lines, than they all fell upon him, and began to plunder him; Lukawſki tearing off with his own hand the riband of the order of the "Black Eagle," which Staniſlaus wore round his neck, and the diamond croſs appendant to it. His motive for this act of violence was not ſo much to poſſeſs himſelf of the King's effects; as to prove to

 Pulawſki

Pulawſki and the confederates, that Staniſlaus was a priſoner in their hands, and already on his way to the army. The riband of the "Black Eagle," which had been conferred by the King of Pruſſia on his Poliſh Majeſty when Count Poniatowſki, would be, he conceived with reaſon, an inconteſtable evidence to his employers, that the attempt had been crowned with complete ſucceſs. Lukawſki then quitted the King, as did Strawinſki, and a great number of their followers, who carried the intelligence to their reſpective leaders; leaving Staniſlaus in the cuſtody of Koſinſki, and ſix of the band. Of all the articles in his Majeſty's pockets, only his tablets eſcaped their rapacity; and he requeſted of them to leave him his handkerchief, which they did without difficulty.

After the departure of Lukawſki, and ſo many of his aſſociates, the few remaining conſpirators, headed by Koſinſki, continued their flight; but, as they could diſtinguish nothing on account of the dark-

 neſs,

neſs, and were beſides unacquainted with the ground, they knew not which way to direct their courſe. At every ſtep, from the inequality, or the ſlippery nature of the fields, through which they wandered, the horſes were unable to keep their legs: they therefore obliged the King to follow them on foot with only one ſhoe, the other being loſt in the dirt. Finding, nevertheleſs, that they only ſtrayed through the meadows, and apprehenſive, every moment, of being overtaken, they again placed him on horſeback, two of them holding him each by the hand, and a third leading his horſe by the bridle. From the time of their paſſing the lines, the inferior conſpirators inceſſantly demanded of Koſinſki, whether the moment was not arrived in which to put the King to death. Their demands became more eager and clamorous, in proportion to the increaſe of the difficulties which ſeemed to prevent their eſcape.

It is impoſſible, on a review of the whole tranſaction, not to allow that Staniſlaus

was cool and maſter of himſelf, under circumstances ſo calculated to bereave him, or any man, of his uſual recollection. Perceiving that his conductors were taking a path which would lead them to a village named Burakow, in which ſome Ruſſians were ſtationed, he warned them not to enter it, and apprized them of the danger. This intimation, which at firſt ſight appears to have been ſo extraordinary, or injudicious, was nevertheleſs dictated by admirable good ſenſe. He apprehended, not without reaſon, that on being aſſailed by a Ruſſian guard, the aſſaſſins would inſtantly complete their work; and after cutting him to pieces with their ſabres, conſult their own ſafety in flight. By giving them notice of the riſk that they incurred, he in ſome degree gained their confidence. In effect, he remarked that his conduct ſeemed to ſoften them, as it implied that he did not meditate to make his eſcape out of their hands. The attitude in which he was held down on the ſaddle, becoming ſo painful as

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to be quite insupportable, he entreated of them at least to allow him to sit more at his ease, to mount him on another horse, and to give him a boot. They gratified him in his requests; and continuing their progress, as chance directed, across almost impassable lands, they arrived at the entrance of the wood of Bielany, only a league distant from Warsaw.

That metropolis meanwhile presented a scene of general confusion, no person knowing what road the assassins had taken, and many conceiving that it was more dangerous to pursue, than to allow them to carry off their prey; since if overtaken, they would infallibly massacre the King in the first instance. Several of the Nobility mounted, nevertheless, their horses, and following the track of the conspirators as well as they were able, got to the place where Stanislaus had passed the lines. There they found his "Pelisse," which had been left behind in the precipitation of his flight; it was pierced with holes made by the bullets or sabres,

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and stained with blood in many parts. After ſuch teſtimonies, little doubt could be entertained that its owner was no more, and the King's death was univerſally conſidered as certain.

During this time he ſtill remained in the hands of Koſinſki, and his ſix aſſociates, who continued to advance with him into the wood of Bielany, when they were ſuddenly hailed by a Ruſſian patrole. They immediately held a ſort of council; at the end of which, four diſappeared. The other three forced him to diſmount and walk; but ſcarcely had a quarter of an hour elapſed, before a ſecond Ruſſian guard challenged them. Terrified at the danger, the two inferior conſpirators fled, leaving Staniſlaus alone with Koſinſki; who holding his ſabre over the King, menaced him with inſtant death, if he attempted delay or reſiſtance. Overcome with fatigue, added to the pain of his bruiſes, he only implored his conductor to stop, and to ſuffer him to take a moment's repoſe. But Koſinſki re-

fused, at the same time informing him that beyond the wood they should find a carriage. Thus compelled, they proceeded together till they found themselves at the gate of the convent of Bielany.

His Majesty now began to conceive some hopes of extricating himself, which were increased by perceiving that his conductor, who wandered without knowing where he was, seemed to be lost in thought, and agitated by reflections. Desirous to profit of these symptoms of irresolution, he said to Kosinski, "I see you are embarrassed which "way to proceed; let me therefore enter "the convent of Bielany, and do you pro- "vide for your own safety."---"No," replied he, "I have sworn." They continued therefore to walk on in silence till they came to Mariemont, a small palace belonging to the Elector of Saxony, not more than two miles from Warsaw. Kosinski expressed some satisfaction at recognising the place, and the King still earnestly requesting a moment's rest, the other at length con-

sented

fented. They fat down on the ground together; Staniflaus endeavouring to improve the time, in order to foften his conductor, and induce him to favour, or permit his efcape.

To this end he reprefented to Kofinfki the atrocity of the crime which he committed, in having undertaken to murder his Sovereign, and the invalidity of any oath adminiftered to him, for the perpetration of fo heinous an offence. In reply the other alledged, that far from being the protector of his people, Staniflaus acted as their oppreffor; and he particularly enumerated fome recent acts of government, which in their operation were not lefs pernicious than they were cruel. The unfortunate King admitted the fact; but in his juftification affured Kofinfki, that the meafures alluded to, were carried into execution by a ftronger power than his; namely the authority of the Baron de Stackelberg, the Ruffian embaffador. "It was no longer "ago than this very day," added he, "that "I took

" I took him afide at the drawing-room, " and remonftrated with him for fome time, " upon the feverity of the orders in quef- " tion." " That may be true," anfwered Kofinfki; " for I was myfelf at Court this " morning, concealed among the crowd; " and I remarked that you was for fome " minutes engaged in earneft converfation " at the window, with the Ruffian Mini- " fter."

This incident feemed to make fuch an impreffion on his mind, that he even let drop expreffions of concern and remorfe; but fuddenly recollecting himfelf, " If," faid he, " I fhould confent, and conduct your " back to Warfaw, what will be the con- " fequence? I fhall be taken and executed." The reflection plunged him into new irrefo- lution. " I give you my word of honour," anfwered Staniflaus, " that no harm fhall " happen to you; but if you doubt my pro- " mife, efcape while there is ftill time! I " can find my way to fome place of fecurity, " and I will certainly direct your purfuers

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" to take the contrary road to that which " you have chofen." Touched by fo generous an affurance, Kofinfki, already fhaken, could no longer contain his emotions: he threw himfelf at the King's feet, implored his Majefty's forgivenefs for the crime which he had been led to commit, and fwore to defend him againft every enemy, relying totally on his generofity for pardon and prefervation. The King reiterated his engagements of protection. Judging however, that it would be prudent to gain fome afylum without delay, and recollecting that there was a mill at a little diftance, he immediately made towards it. They arrived at the door in a few minutes.

Kofinfki, by the King's defire, knocked, but no anfwer was returned. He then broke a pane of glafs in the window, and entreated that they would afford fhelter to a nobleman who had been plundered by robbers. The mafter of the hut peremptorily refufed, fuppofing them to be banditti, and for above half an hour con-

tinued to perſiſt in his denial of opening the door. Staniſlaus therefore at length approached, and ſpeaking through the broken pane, endeavoured to perſuade the miller to admit him under the roof; adding, "If we were robbers, as you apprehend, it would be eaſy for us to uſe violence, and to break the whole window, inſtead of one pane." The argument prevailed; they opened the door, and admitted him. He immediately wrote on his tablets, which had accidentally eſcaped the rapacity of the aſſaſſins, a few lines to General Coccii, Colonel of the firſt regiment of foot-guards. They were literally as follows: "Par une eſpece de miracle je ſuis ſauvé des mains des aſſaſſins. Je ſuis ici, au petit moulin de Mariemont. Venez au plutôt, me tirer d'ici. Je ſuis bleſſé, mais pas fort." It was not without the utmoſt difficulty that he could perſuade any one to carry the note to Warſaw; as the people of the mill ſtill believed him to be, what he profeſſed himſelf, a gen-

gentleman who had been attacked and wounded by robbers. Kofinfki offered to reftore to his Majefty every thing which he had taken from his perfon, but Staniflaus left him all, except the blue riband of the "White Eagle."

On the arrival of the meffenger at Warfaw, the general joy, heightened by aftonifhment, was incredible. General Cocceii, accompanied by a detachment of the guards, rode inftantly to the mill, where he found Kofinfki ftanding at the door with his fabre drawn, who admitted him as foon as he recognized his perfon. A fcene equally curious and affecting took place on his entrance into the hut. The firft object which prefented itfelf, was the King ftretched on the floor, covered with the miller's cloak, funk into a fort of fleep or of infenfibility, caufed by fatigue. Cocceii threw himfelf at his Majefty's feet, calling him his Sovereign, and kiffing his hand. It was then for the firft time, that the miller and his family difcovered the quality of their gueft;

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and they ſoon followed the example of the General, by throwing themſelves on their knees. I have heard General Cocceii relate theſe circumſtances, and I have been at the mill itſelf, rendered celebrated by ſo extraordinary an event: it is a wretched Poliſh hovel, remote from any houſe or habitation. Staniſlaus has gratefully recompenſed its owner, by building him a mill upon the Viſtula, and adding to it a ſmall penſion.

About five o'clock in the morning, the King arrived in Cocceii's carriage, at his palace in the capital. Scarcely would the people credit the evidence of their ſenſes, when they ſaw him return, or believe that he was ſtill alive. Nothing could in fact be more wonderful, or more contrary to all probability. His wound, though deep, was not dangerous, and he ſoon recovered the perſonal bruiſes and injuries which he had ſuffered on that memorable night. But he long preſerved, and ſtill retains the impreſſion made on his mind, by ſo deſperate an attempt. Well aware how much the Con-

federates

federates detefted, and confidered him as the author of the calamities of Poland, he had always entertained apprehenfions that their vengeance would aim at his life. Even now he cannot be confidered as exempt from fimilar, or perhaps greater misfortunes.

On the day fubfequent to his affaffination, Mr. Wroughton haftened to congratulate him on his efcape; and Staniflaus related to him the tranfaction, in nearly the fame words which I have ufed. Then taking him by the hand, "I always believed," faid he, "my dear Wroughton, that the Con-"federates would execute what you have "witneffed, and I have proved but too "right in my conjecture. Yet, merely for "my life I was not afraid, from the mo-"ment that inftead of difpatching me, as "they might have done, I found that the "Confpirators carried me out of the city. "I imagined indeed, that their intention "was to conduct me to the confederate "army, and to put me to death: but I "nourifhed fome faint hopes, that if I could

" could convince them I had never merited
" their hatred, I might succeed in winning
" them over to my side. I even squeezed
" Kosinski's hand in mine, while he plun-
" dered me of my effects; hopeful to
" awaken in him sentiments of loyalty, or
" at least of compassion." Stanislaus, who knew his countrymen well, relied not without reason, on the levity, flexibility, and inconsistency of character which distinguish the Poles as a nation.

It is hardly to be credited, that of three chiefs to whom the enterprize was intrusted, two should quit him at the most critical moment, in order to carry the intelligence to their employers, instead of fulfilling the object of their attempt; and that the third should be won over by Stanislaus, to conduct him back to his capital. Nor is it more easy to conceive how men, when once worked up by enmity and fanaticism to undertake such a crime, should leave it incomplete, after all the difficulties attending it were surmounted. Damien, who failed in

in his attempt to aſſaſſinate Louis the Fifteenth; and the Duke d'Aveiro, who equally miſcarried in his conſpiracy to deſtroy the late King of Portugal, were unable fully to accompliſh their deſign. But the Poliſh aſſaſſins, after vanquiſhing every obſtacle, and carrying off their prey with unexampled ſucceſs, liberated him either by their precipitancy, their cowardice, or their repentance. Had he once been brought to the camp of the confederate Generals, there can be no doubt that he would have ſuffered death: perhaps juridically, like Charles the Firſt of England.

I return to the ſequel of the conſpiracy. Koſinſki, to whom Staniſlaus owed his preſervation, was a man of mean extraction, born in the Palatinate of Cracow, having aſſumed the name of Koſinſki, which is that of a noble Poliſh family. By his ſervices in the confederate army, he had riſen to the rank of an officer under the command of Pulawſki. While the two other aſſociated chiefs remained with him, he continued

unſhaken in his purpoſe ; but from the moment of his being abandoned by them, he began to waver in his determination, and to entertain ideas of preſerving the King. The ſolemn oath which he had taken, and the benediction given to the enterprize by the Nuncio, long operated nevertheleſs, in ſuſtaining his reſolution. Even after he had conducted the King in ſafety back to Warſaw, he expreſſed more than once, his doubts of the rectitude of his paſt conduct, and a degree of concern or repentance for having deceived his employers. He was therefore detained under a very ſtrict guard, and obliged to give evidence againſt his two companions, Lukawſki and Strawenſki; who being both taken ſoon afterwards, were brought priſoners to Warſaw. The former was ſeized in a cottage, while in bed with his miſtreſs. Both were ſolemnly tried, and adjudged to die ; but at the King's interceſſion with the Diet, that Tribunal conſented to mitigate the cruel part of the ſentence. Inſtead of inflicting on the two

 chiefs,

chiefs, the variety of tortures which the laws of Poland enact against regicides, they were simply beheaded. Stanislaus equally interposed his interest to save from capital punishment, several of the inferior conspirators. They were only condemned to work during life on the fortifications of Kaminieck in Podolia, where they continue prisoners at this time.

Throughout the whole period of his detention, and on his trial, Lukawski behaved with firmness and composure, never manifesting any symptoms of weakness or pusillanimity. He suffered at the same hour with Strawenski; and Mr. Wroughton, who saw them both die, has assured me, that nothing could exceed the dignity with which the former submitted to his fate. When he was led out to the scaffold, though his body was much extenuated by the severity of his confinement, diet, and treatment; his spirit, unsubdued, raised him above the ignominy of an infamous and public execu-

tion. He had not been permitted to ſhave his beard while in priſon, and his dreſs correſponded with his figure; but none of theſe humiliations could depreſs his mind. With indignation he refuſed to ſee or to embrace Koſinſki, whom he branded with the appellation of a Traitor. On arriving at the place of puniſhment, about a mile from Warſaw, he betrayed no unbecoming emotion; and his harangue to the multitude aſſembled to ſee him die, breathed the ſame ſpirit which animated his life. He expreſſed neither ſorrow nor contrition for his attempt againſt the King, which he conſidered rather as meritorious than criminal. His head was ſevered from his body. Strawenſki diſplayed equal indifference, and reſigned himſelf in ſilence to his ſentence. Within a few days ſubſequent to their execution, the King ſent away Koſinſki into Italy, as his life would probably have been unſafe in Poland, after betraying the cauſe in which he had engaged. He now reſides

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at Senigallia in the papal territories, and enjoys from his Majeſty an annual allowance of three hundred ducats.

To the intended aſſaſſination of Staniſlaus, which was fruſtrated in ſo extraordinary a manner, ſucceeded in the following year, the actual partition of his dominions: an event, the cauſes, completion, and conſequences of which, I have already endeavoured to delineate in a former letter. It was in vain that the unfortunate Prince attempted to protract the diſmemberment of the country over which he nominally reigned. His ſtruggles only manifeſted to all Europe, the helpleſs condition of the Poliſh Sovereign and nation. Conſcious of the perſonal diſhonour that he muſt incur, by ſigning an act which equally degraded both, he long refuſed to participate in ſuch a proceeding. He even gave the Engliſh Miniſter at Warſaw, the ſtrongeſt and moſt ſolemn aſſurances, that he would neither be induced by offers, nor compelled by violence, to ſubſcribe ſo humiliating a renunciation. "I

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"present you my hand," ſaid he to Mr. Wroughton, in the agony of his mind; "and I authoriſe you to inform your "Court in my name, that I will rather "ſuffer it to be cut off, than ſubmit to do "a deed which muſt for ever ſully my "name and reign."

The King's ſubſequent conduct correſponded ill with his declarations: after reluctantly ſigning the avowal of the claims ſet up by the three Powers, he added his conſent to the perpetual alienation of the ſequeſtered provinces, from the Crown and Republic of Poland. We muſt not however, too ſeverely condemn him for his want of reſolution, which could only have been ruinous to himſelf, without producing the ſmalleſt benefit to his country. As his refuſal would neceſſarily have coſt him the crown to which he had been raiſed, he had not the magnanimity to renounce it, and to return into a private ſtation, rather than yield to the mandate impoſed on him. We might indeed have admired him, if he had preferred the alternative of abdicat-

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ing the throne; but circumftanced as he was, it could fcarcely be expected. A fceptre, even when robbed of its brighteft ornaments, dignity and independance; is ftill too intoxicating a poffeffion to be voluntarily relinquifhed by thofe, who have been accuftomed to the homage which it procures. Staniflaus, it muft likewife be remembered, was neither beloved by the majority of his fubjects, nor would he have found in their allegiance and affection any fteady fupport. On the other hand, Catharine who had elevated him to the royal dignity, would infallibly have precipitated him from it, if he had refufed to comply with her commands. He had in fact no choice except fubmiffion; and pofterity will incline rather to pity, than to cenfure him, for the involuntary part which he acted in the difmemberment of his country.

From that period to the prefent, Poland can fcarcely with propriety be faid to have any hiftory, or any political exiftence. Almoft without commerce, abfolutely without a foreign ally, and deftitute of internal

force or revenues adequate to its own emancipation; compreffed on all fides by three powerful monarchies, it feems to wait in filent expectation the fentence of its total extinction. The King and the Diet are only empty names: Warfaw is governed by Ruffian councils, and fubjected by Ruffian troops. Even the provinces are torpid; and the Confederates, who fo long endeavoured to avert the deftruction of the Republic, have only by their imprudent efforts accelerated its fall. Such is the fate of a country, which under a wife government, might have been juftly ranked among the moft powerful European States; which in the courfe of the laft century, carried at one time its victorious arms into the heart of Mufcovy; and faved Vienna at another, from falling into the hands of the Turks; but, which now only holds out a memorable leffon to the prefent, as well as to future ages.

The character of Staniflaus is not one of thofe either hard to penetrate, or difficult to delineate. As a man and an individual, he

he is certainly more amiable, more an object of attachment and respect, than when contemplated in his kingly capacity. His person, from the concurring testimony of all who knew him in his youth, was handsome; graceful, and elegant. Such, Count Poniatowski doubtless appeared in the eyes of Catharine the Second, when he first arrived at Petersburgh. But, the graces of that period of his life are fled; and within the last three or four years he is become too lusty, though it would be unjust to say even now that he is at all corpulent. He is of a middle stature, well proportioned, and of a manly figure. His face is open, pleasing, and interesting; the features bold and strongly marked, particularly his nose and chin. Stanislaus's complexion is pale, and he wears his own hair, which is of a deep colour, approaching to black. There is said to be in his cast of countenance, something pensive and melancholy. At first sight, I confess, this expression did not strike me; but the oftener I have had opportunities of seeing and studying him, the more visible it becomes;

becomes; in profile it is particularly apparent. I believe, however, that it is more the result of his actual situation, his past calamites, and his future prospects, than natural and congenial to him. In fact, whether he casts his view backwards, or directs it forward to the final destiny that awaits him, how vast a train of awful and painful reflection must necessarily open on his mind! I have sometimes seen him stand in a thoughtful attitude, musing, silent, and as I could fancy, occupied in considering his future fate. It is impossible not to feel for him at such moments, a more than common interest.

The King of Poland does not particularly excel in any of the exercises of the body; and though he rides well, he scarcely ever hunts. He still continues to dance the Poloneze national dances, but he has left off every other kind, above two years. In music he has no taste, nor does he possess even a moderate ear. A circumstance more singular is, that he never plays at cards.

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I am aſſured that neither his Majeſty, nor any of the Poniatowſki family were ever able to make themſelves maſters of the common games of cards, ſo as to attain in them a tolerable degree of perfection. He is a lover and a patron of all the fine arts; but in paintings he has great judgment, and has collected ſome few valuable pieces of the firſt maſters. No Prince was ever more gracious, eaſy, and affable in his manners and addreſs; which is the reſult of natural diſpoſition, not the effect of artifice. His converſation is pleaſing, and frequently diſplays, without the ſmalleſt affectation, extenſive reading. Few individuals ſpeak ſo fluently or gracefully the principal European languages. Scarcely any living Sovereign, if we except Joſeph the Second, has travelled ſo much as Staniſlaus: thoſe Perſons who have known him in the different characters of a private Gentleman and a King, are univerſally attached to him; and his elevation to a throne has not deprived him

of

of the friends, whom he had acquired when Count Poniatowſki.

If, after conſidering him as a man, we view him as a monarch, he appears to ſink in our eſtimation: he is amiable, not great; engaging, but not impoſing. Deficient in the ſtrong powers of diſcernment, as well as in the vigour of mind which his ſituation demanded, he is not calculated to ſtem, and ſtill leſs to direct the ſtorm, by which he has been aſſailed. He may be ſaid rather to poſſeſs a lively and pleaſing, than a ſolid and penetrating underſtanding. The facility of his nature expoſes him to deception; and the flexibility of his temper is abuſed by favorites, who acquire and retain an aſcendancy over him. Adulation under every form, finds too eaſy an acceſs to his heart; peculiarly when, aided by female attractions, it aſſumes the maſk of affection. The perſons who ſurround him, availing themſelves of this foible, frequently obtain by importunity the recompences due only

only to merit. One of his Polish Majesty's weaknesses, which is flattered with the greatest success, is his supposed resemblance in the leading features of his mind and body, to Henry the Fourth of France. The personal similarity is however, much more imaginary than real; but as his forehead, nose, and chin, are all bold and prominent, like those of the King of Navarre, there is a sufficient basis on which for the adulation of courtiers to found a likeness. His gallantries, his affability, his clemency, his ascending from a private station to a throne; and lastly, his having, like Henry, escaped from assassination: all these circumstances are enumerated and insisted on, as striking proofs of a resemblance between the French and the Polish Sovereign. Unfortunately the parallel fails in more essential articles of character; in wisdom, firmness, heroic valor, discernment, and above all in frugality.'

It is believed that Stanislaus is by no means deficient in personal courage, though he

he has never feen fervice, nor can be fuppofed to poffefs the qualifications of a man educated in military habits. He very frequently wears a uniform, and reviews from time to time, like other Princes, his guards and troops. But his talents are more calculated for the calm, than the tempeft; for the labour of the cabinet, than the exertions of the field. He paffes much of his time, fhut up in his apartments, occupied in writing, and engaged in private bufinefs of various kinds. To thefe employments he feems adapted; for he dictates, or compofes, not only with eafe, but with elegance; and his eloquence, when he harangues, is at once touching, copious, and perfuafive. So confcious is Staniflaus of his being unequal to, and unfit for his fituation, that he has faid to Mr. Wroughton more than once, "Mon ami, je fens que je ne fuis pas à "ma place: j'aurois du être Chancelièr, et "non pas Roi."

The greateft defect of his character, public and private, is the want of economy. His liberality

liberality of diſpoſition, which degenerates into prodigality, involves him in continual pecuniary difficulties; and though his revenues are ample, he is nevertheleſs poor. As ſome compenſation for the loſs of power, and the diminution of prerogative; the Ruſſians, after the late diſmemberment of Poland, increaſed his private ſalary from the State. His Majeſty's clear annual receipt at this time, does not fall ſhort of two hundred and thirty thouſand pounds ſterling. All the great officers of the crown are moreover paid, not by him, but by the Republic. Yet, with ſo princely an income, he has no treaſure, no fund for future exigencies; and ſcarcely can he find wherewithal to maintain his dignity, or to ſupport his houſehold. As there is neither order nor ſyſtem in his expences, he is devoured by his family, and impoveriſhed by his miſtreſſes and attendants. Count Rzewuſki, "Marechal de la Cour," who has the direction of the privy purſe, allows the King about eighteen hundred pounds

ſterling

ſterling a month for his ordinary expenditure. This ſum, which ought to be adequate to all his wants, is nevertheleſs inſufficient, becauſe it is not managed with prudence, nor ſuperintended by a judicious frugality.

Staniſlaus, at every period of his life, has been remarkable for his gallantry, and ſenſibility to female charms. The graces of his perſon, which opened him a way to the throne of Poland, rendered him early acceptable to the other ſex. They continue to retain too great an aſcendant over him, and they have completed the deſtruction of his finances. He ſtill nouriſhes the wiſh to be beloved, and women are not wanting to avail themſelves of his weakneſs. Under profeſſions of diſintereſted paſſion, they obtain from him more than they could gain by the ſale of their beauty. Yet his Poliſh Majeſty is approaching faſt to the age, when men ceaſe to be objects of real attachment, and are uſually the dupes of intereſted love. Perhaps the King does not ſufficiently

ſufficiently attend to this law of nature, from which he is not more exempt than others.

On the ſubject of his amours, which have been numerous and almost indiſcriminate, I ſhall ſay little: for many reaſons they are better conſigned to oblivion. But Staniſlaus, though naturally inconſtant and changeable, is yet capable of a laſting paſſion. After his election to the crown, he became attached to the Princeſs C——a, one of the moſt beautiful and accompliſhed ladies of Poland. Their attachment was ſo far from being private or myſterious, that on the contrary all Warſaw witneſſed it. During a conſiderable time ſhe reigned in his heart without a rival; till confiding too implicitly in her fondneſs, he ventured at length to treat her with neglect. Indignant at ſuch uſage, in a moment of reſentment, when he leaſt expected it, ſhe broke off all connexion with him, and attached herſelf to Prince Repnin, the Ruſſian ambaſſador. It was in vain that Staniſlaus

attempted to mollify her by ſubmiſſion, or to awaken her former paſſion: ſhe ſhut her door againſt him, refuſed to admit him to her preſence, and would never liſten to any overtures of reconciliation. He was inconſolable for a long time, and even abandoned himſelf when in private, to the moſt immoderate tranſports of grief or of dejection.

The King has no natural children avowed as ſuch, nor has he had any, male or female, ſince his elevation to the throne; but when Count Poniatowſki, he had two by a woman of very inferior condition. They are both abſolutely diſowned, and educated in obſcurity. He continues to lead however a life which may be termed libertine and diſſolute, more eſpecially at forty-ſix years of age, when youth can be no longer pleaded in extenuation. Two females divide his time, and occupy his attention, if not his heart at this moment: the firſt, Madam T——s, an Italian, though now in her wane, is ſtill extremely beautiful. Her figure,

figure, manners, and countenance, all breathe an air of voluptuoufnefs. She reminds me of the Aleinas and the Calypfos of fable, as Fenelon and Ariofto have depictured them. The other, the Countefs G——a, is more elegant, feminine, and pleafing. I have fupped with his Polifh Majefty at General Cocceii's, where he was feated between thefe two female favorites. In return for the favours which they beftow on him, they drain his purfe; and contribute neither to render him more refpectable, nor probably in fact more happy.

His Polifh Majefty has two brothers, and as many fifters alive. Cafimir, Prince Poniatowfki, the eldeft, who is near eleven years older than the King, unfortunately refembles him in the parts of his character, which are by no means models for imitation. His diffipations and his profufions have reduced him to the neceffity of alienating the high poft of "Great Chamberlain of the "Crown," and have rendered him dependant on the King for his principal fupport.

Prince Poniatowſki has one ſon, named Staniſlaus, who is at this time near five-and-twenty; and who at leaſt cannot be accuſed of following the example either of his father or his uncle: extravagance is by no means his fault, or his characteriſtic. Should the crown of Poland be continued in the family of Poniatowſki, it is on him that the Empreſs of Ruſſia will probably cauſe it to devolve, whenever it may become vacant. He certainly entertains hopes, however chimerical, of aſcending the throne; and with a view of facilitating ſo great an object of ambition, he has been not long ſince, on a viſit to the Court of Petersburgh. All circumſtances conſidered, it is however very improbable that theſe viſions of royalty will ever be realized, or that the ſceptre will be perpetuated in the collateral deſcendants of the reigning Sovereign.

A dark cloud overſpreads the evening of Staniſlaus's life and reign: he feels its preſſure, and ſometimes gives vent to the agitations of his mind, on the tender ſub-

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ject of his future profpects. Many times has he predicted to Mr. Wroughton, that his end will be difaftrous and violent. Not long ago, grafping the Englifh Envoy's hand, "Ah, mon ami," faid he, "je fuis "reservé pour des nouveaux et des grands "malheurs. Je mourrai comme Charles "Premiér d'Angleterre." Such predictions, it is evident, are merely the apprehenfions of a man, who fees the precarious tenure by which he holds his crown; who is furrounded by enemies domeftic as well as foreign; who has efcaped by a fort of miracle, from affaffination, and who anticipates as certain, dangers which are only contingent. Yet we muft confefs, that there is too much reafon to tremble for the fate of Staniflaus. The tempefts which at prefent feem overblown, will probably wake again, and may finally overturn both the Sovereign and the Republic of Poland. But thefe fpeculations would lead me too far, and I fhall therefore clofe my letter.

## LETTER XXI.

*Decline of the Court of Warſaw ſince the acceſſion of the preſent King.—Deſcription of Staniſlaus's villa.—General Cocceii.—Proſtitution of honors and dignities in Poland.—Venality of the upper ranks.—Libertiniſm.—Number, facility, and inſtances of divorces.—Virtues of the Poles.—Female character.—Elegance of dreſs.—Portrait of a Poliſh woman of quality.—Heroiſm of the women.—Military forces.—Environs of Warſaw.—Villanow.—Examination of John Sobieſki's reign and character.—Enquiries relative to the "Plica Polonica."—Poliſh Peaſants.—Reflections on the actual condition, and future fate of Poland.*

WARSAW, *July* 26, 1778.

THE Court, as may naturally be ſuppoſed, has declined in ſplendor during the courſe of the preſent reign, proportionably with the diminution ſuſtained by Poland in national wealth, greatneſs, and power.

power. Such a change, even before the partition of 1772, was certain and inevitable. While the Saxon Princes held the ſceptre, a vaſt portion of the revenues of their hereditary dominions, flowed into the country of which they were the elective Sovereigns. Compelled to divide their time between the Poliſh and the Saxon capitals, all the arts as well as the refinements of Dreſden accompanied them when they removed to Warſaw. Mr. Wroughton, who remembers the laſt years of the period to which I allude, aſſures me that the number and beauty of the equipages, horſes, and train of the great nobility, who uſually came to welcome the arrival of Auguſtus the Third, exceeded deſcription. Prince Radzivil in particular, whoſe patrimonial eſtates were then of a magnitude and extent approaching to royal, ſometimes united with the elegance of European taſte, the barbarous pomp of Sarmatian manners. He once entered Warſaw in his coach, drawn by ſix white bears caught in his own Lithuanian

forests, harnessed, and broken in for the purpose; but their ferocity and intractability rendered them dangerous to their keepers. I should not venture to relate the fact, if I did not hold it from so high an authority. However extraordinary it may appear, the manners of Poland render it credible.

Stanislaus's drawing-room, or to speak more properly, his levee, though numerously attended, displays no magnificence. He only acts the Sovereign, and performs the part of King in the circle, while Count Stackelberg possesses the effective power, and dispenses all the favors of the Crown. A number of the first nobility still appear at Court in the Polish habit, which gives the crowd a picturesque appearance. In summer the King retires to a little villa or seat, not quite a mile from Warsaw, where he resides in great privacy, rather as a private gentleman than as a crowned head. This retreat, for it is no more, is called "Les Bains," there being in the centre of the

building a circular bath, covered with a dome. The houſe, which lies in a deep baſon or hollow, ſurrounded by hills and woods, is very agreeable in warm weather; but the ſituation renders it unwholeſome, as ſoon as the autumnal rains and damps commence. I have had the honor of dining there with his Majeſty in a very ſmall company, of which Mr. Wroughton was one. The youngeſt of his two ſiſters, the Counteſs Branicza; his nephew, Prince Joſeph Poniatowſki, a youth of fifteen, who is brought up under the King's immediate care; and the Biſhop of Plockzo, Stanislaus's youngeſt ſurviving brother, were preſent. His Poliſh Majeſty appears to great advantage on ſuch occaſions, from which ceremony is baniſhed; and for which he ſeems more deſigned by nature, than for public life and ſituations of difficulty. He allowed me to ſurvey every part of his little manſion. Horace's Sabine farm could ſcarcely be ſmaller; but it is voluptuouſly furniſhed, and contains ſome paintings of value.

value. On the table of his cabinet, which is fitted up with decorations and pictures in the Chinese taste, lay spread, a melancholy subject of contemplation. It was a fine map of Poland, on a great scale, recently struck, and in which the *dismembered provinces* are accurately marked, with their *new* appellations. Frederic has denominated his share La Prusse Occidentale;" and Maria Theresa has revived the titles of "Gallicia and Lodomiria," which now supersede the ancient geographical names of those portions of Poland. Such a mute, but eloquent companion constantly before his eyes, which reminds him of his departed greatness, cannot tend to enliven the hours of Stanislaus's retirement, or to inspire him with gay ideas.

It is at General Cocceii's that I have seen him more unbent, more convivial, and more apparently cheerful than anywhere else. That veteran officer, equally a man of letters, a soldier, and a polite gentleman, commands a regiment of Polish guards. He is now

now advancing faſt towards old age; but he is vigorous, communicative, hoſpitable, and of an excellent ſociety. After having once been the friend of the great Frederic, he is now, in the evening of life, become the companion of Staniſlaus; who, if inferior in talents and ſtrength of genius, is in other points of view far more amiable than the ſtern philoſopher of "Sans Souci." Cocceii reſides in a ſort of ſuburban villa, juſt out of Warſaw, where he has frequently the honour of entertaining his Poliſh Majeſty. There, in a ſelect company of both ſexes, after ſupper, and undiſturbed by corroding reflections, which as Cervantes well obſerves, ſeldom hold much interference at ſuch times; the King ſeems to forget at once his paſt misfortunes, his preſent depreſſion, and his future proſpects. His converſation, manners, and whole deportment, convince me how pleaſing he must have been when Count Poniatowſki. I am not ſurpriſed that Catharine, after admitting him to ſo diſtinguiſhed a place in her affec-
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tions, elevated him to the throne of Poland; but I fear Stanislaus will have caufe to lament, that love and fortune fhould have confpired to raife him from a private ftation to royalty. Juvenal's obfervation, when fpeaking of the death of Kings, in the tenth fatire, continually recurs to my mind, as I reflect on the fingular deftiny of this amiable Prince.

The general diffolution of morals among the upper orders, is not one of the leaft extraordinary and characteriftic features of the capital and country from which I am writing. Neither Peterfburgh nor Naples can furpafs Warfaw in thefe refpects. All the principles which bind fociety together, and which purify or perpetuate it, appear to me to be relaxed among the Poles. The army, the court, the church, and every department of private life, are more or lefs infected. Thofe inftitutions, civil and political, which in their very nature fhould be moft free from the contagion, are tainted. Boys who have never feen a camp, nor attained

tained the ſlighteſt degree of profeſſional experience, receive commiſſions as colonels and generals. The habit of a ſoldier, which ought to be rigidly confined to ſuch as are in military ſervice, is proſtituted; and almoſt every nobleman at pleaſure wears a uniform. The blue riband of the "White Eagle," as well as the red riband of "St. Staniſlaus," which latter was inſtituted by his preſent Majeſty, are ſo common that ſcarcely a private gentleman is without one or both of them. Murders and aſſaſſinations, in the metropolis as well as in the provinces, are committed with impunity: nor is it ſafe, even at this ſeaſon of the year, to walk the ſtreets of Warſaw by night, unaccompanied and unarmed. Not only the want of lamps is favourable to the perpetration of every kind of crime; but what is ſtill worſe, the Ruſſians protect for money the moſt atrocious delinquents.

The priſons throughout the kingdom are crowded with wretched individuals of both sexes,

ſexes, immured, not for tranſgreſſions againſt the law or the ſtate; but the victims of arbitrary power, of violence, and of every kind of oppreſſion. It is here that Mr. Howard will find ample ſcope and ſubject for his benevolent enquiries, and active exertions. In no country of Europe is the rage of gaming carried to a more pernicious pitch, or does it produce more deſtructive conſequences. Neither the paſt devaſtations of rebellion and war, which have impoveriſhed the nobility; nor the lamentable condition of the Republic itſelf verging to its total fall, impoſe a check on the ſpirit of play. It pervades every company, and ſeems to acquire force, as the means of ſupporting it are diminiſhed. The Ruſſian ambaſſador's Hotel reſembles at noon-day, as I have ſeen, rather a club of gameſters, than the reſidence of a great public Miniſter, charged with the adminiſtration and government of Poland. Similar ſcenes are exhibited in the houſes of the firſt nobility, who,

who, after having fold their country, often lofe in an evening the fruit of their venality or their difhonor.

If fuch be the picture of the upper claffes, it cannot be fuppofed that the fofter fex is exempt from the vices which diftinguifh the men. It is not in fact gallantry, but licentioufnefs, which here reigns without control. The very idea of concealment is derided as unneceffary; and I will venture to affert, that women of the firft diftinction derive more pride and refpect from the rank or qualities of their lovers, than from thofe of their hufbands. Staniflaus's example tends not a little to encourage the depravity of his Court; and during his reign it has attained to a point, unexampled fince the time of Auguftus the Second; an æra remarkable for the corruption of manners. The prefence of a Queen muft neceffarily have impofed fome reftraint on the courtiers and ladies about her perfon; as the abfence of fuch a check, has completed the diffolution of female morals. One of the

the natural confequences, is the facility with which divorces are here obtained; and of courfe, their frequency. I am almoft afraid to relate what I fee and know on this point; fo incredible may it appear. If infidelity to the nuptual bed was alledged and proved, it might be admitted as a legitimate caufe for fuch feparations: but hardly any reafons are ufually affigned or required, except mutual incompatibility, diflike, or weariness in the parties. Women of irreproachable manners and conduct, young, beautiful, and highly born, are divorced at the end of three or four years, of a year, nay, of a few months. Should it be requifite to adduce inftances in fupport of this affertion, almoft every week offers them here in abundance.

Prince Martin Lubomirfki is at prefent foliciting a divorce from his *fecond* wife. His *firft*, the Countefs Haddick, an Auftrian by birth, daughter of Marfhal Haddick, is now fcarcely twenty-eight years of age, uncommonly pleafing in her perfon, and

and accomplifhed in her manners. He had no fpecific caufe of diflike to her, nor any crime to lay to her charge: but he had become enamoured of his *prefent* wife. He is now in turn weary of *her*, and wifhes to marry a *third*. There is little or no doubt of his procuring a fecond divorce, with the fame facility that he obtained the firft. I went with Mr. Wroughton a few days ago, to vifit the Princefs Zangufka, at a pleafant retreat on the banks of the Viftula, about half a mile out of town. She is a very elegant woman, not yet twenty-four. We found her in her garden, walking arm in arm with the Grand Chancellor of Poland, her hufband the Prince Zangufki, and another lady, under the fhade of fome lofty trees. They were amicably foliciting a divorce from the head of the law; who here can grant them with nearly the fame eafe, that the Pope difpenfes pardons or indulgences. I underftand, the Prince is foon to be married to the very lady with whom he was then walking, in company with his

own wife; and the two ladies live together at this moment in the greateſt intimacy. Even the young Counteſs Po——a, niece to the King, and of unexceptionable conduct, was divorced not long ſince, after only *four months* marriage. I could enumerate many more examples of the ſame kind. In any other European country, practices ſo repugnant to every principle of morals, as well as of policy, would ſoon be prevented. But in Poland, the reſtraints of law, as well as the ties of honour and decorum, are exceedingly weakened in their operation.

After having drawn ſo unpleaſing a picture of the vices of the higher orders, it is however, only a piece of juſtice to mention their good qualities; ſince, if they cannot be ſaid to outweigh, they form at leaſt ſome counterpoiſe in the oppoſite ſcale. The Poliſh men of condition poſſeſs a captivating exterior, and nowhere are to be found more accompliſhed cavaliers. In all the exerciſes of the body they are expert; but it is on horſeback that they peculiarly excel.

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" Le Polonais eſt né à cheval;" and they preſerve undiminiſhed this original characteriſtic of their Sarmatian or Scythian origin. I never ſaw men ride ſo gracefully, or unite a more martial air, with the elegance and ſoftneſs of modern manners. In converſation they are full of urbanity, gay, communicative, and well bred. Almoſt all the young nobility have travelled, particularly into France; from which country they have brought back the ſuperficial, but modiſh addreſs, only to be gained at Paris. French is not anywhere ſpoken more generally or fluently than at Warſaw: for the Poles, like the Ruſſians, have a national facility at acquiring foreign languages. They are magnificent and ſhewy in their entertainments, with which they contrive to mix all the delicacy of an expenſive taſte, and a creative fancy. It is to be lamented that a race of men, endowed with ſuch qualities and faculties, ſhould in general be falſe, inconſiſtent, fickle, prodigal, and deficient in that judgment, conduct, and conſiſtency

 of

of character, without which all external and ornamental talents are comparatively of no value or importance.

If the *men* excel in perſonal endowments and accompliſhments, the Poliſh *women* of rank or condition are equally pleaſing. The world does not produce females more winning, poliſhed, or calculated to charm in converſation. They have neither the ſhyneſs and coldneſs of the Engliſh, nor the reſerve and haughtineſs of the Auſtrian women. Eaſe, joined with grace, and animated by the wiſh to pleaſe, render them infinitely agreeable. In beauty they may diſpute the palm with any country; and their attractions are commonly heightened by all the refinements of dreſs and of coquetry. It is not my intention to apologize for their levity; ſtill leſs to excuſe their libertiniſm; but thoſe imperfections and faults are probably more the reſult of ſituation, than of natural depravity or licentiouſneſs. In a court and capital ſuch as Warſaw, under a Prince ſuch as Staniſlaus, it

is not eaſy to reſiſt the ſeduction of example, added to the torrent of immorality. The ſame woman who in Poland is a Meſſalina, if tranſported to Vienna or to London, would have given an example of every conjugal virtue. It is ſociety, religion, morals, and laws, which model individuals, and call into action every thing valuable in our nature. Here, all that I ſee, announces not leſs the internal diſſolution, than the external deſtruction of Poland.

The elegance and variety of the ornaments of the toilet are no where better underſtood, or more ſucceſsfully practiſed, than in this capital; where the ladies affect to diſdain the formal reſtraints impoſed by cuſtom in other courts. I have ſeen the ſame women habited in the dreſſes of different nations and different centuries; a circumſtance that ſeems to excite no aſtoniſhment here. There is ſomething Aſiatic in the ſtyle of female attire, which reminds me of Greek or Turkiſh, more than of French or German modes. In a country

which frontiers on Moldavia and the Ukraine, ſuch a departure, or rather emancipation, from the "coſtume" of Paris, does not, and ought not to ſurpriſe. I dined the day before yeſterday, with the Princeſs Z——a, at her villa near the Viſtula, accompanied by Mr. Wroughton. The weather being inſupportably warm, we paſſed the whole afternoon in her garden, under the ſpreading ſhade of ſome large elms, not far from the bank of the river. I had then an opportunity of attentively conſidering her dreſs, which I will endeavour to deſcribe. Whatever inability the attempt may diſcover, it will convey to you an idea of the toilet of a Poliſh woman of quality, who adds to the advantages of birth and fortune, the additional attractions of youth and beauty.

Her head-dreſs had no reſemblance to any thing beheld in other parts of Europe; for ſhe neither wore powder, nor was her hair frizzed, but on the contrary, ſimply combed down over her forehead, and bound

by

by a muſlin fillet. Two treſſes twiſted, which fell from the left ſide, were negligently pinned to a ſort of turban, compoſed likewiſe of muſlin, that encircled her head. Her robe was of a pale roſe color, bordered by a rich embroidery, and deſcending to her feet, but without concealing them. About her waiſt was faſtened a girdle or ceſtus of ſilk, near nine inches in breadth. It is exactly the zone of the Greeks and of Homer, which is ſtill worn in Walachia. A broad Medicis of Dreſden lace ſurrounded her boſom and ſhoulders, which were partly uncovered, partly veiled by her ſhift and a Turkiſh gauze, calculated rather to diſplay, than to hide, thoſe parts of her perſon. Over her whole figure was diffuſed a voluptuous air, which added to the effect of her natural attractions. She ſhewed us her maids, who had juſt returned from bathing; young Poloneze girls, riſing in ſtature one above the other, and reſembling nymphs, in looſe drapery, with their wet hair floating down their backs. The Princeſs herſelf,

like Lady Wortley Montague's Fatima, is a native of Kaminiecz on the borders of Moldavia; and when a child, had, as ſhe told me, frequently been carried by her mother into the Haram of the Baſhaw of Choczim, capital of that Turkiſh province. I have found her converſation on every ſubject, not leſs intereſting than her figure; and I regret that my appoaching departure from Warſaw, will ſo ſoon interrupt our acquaintance.

It is not merely in the intercourſe of private life, in the graces of perſonal deportment, or in the ornaments of female cultivation, that the Poliſh women excel. They have in a variety of inſtances, diſplayed maſculine firmneſs and courage above their ſex; peculiarly during the period when their country was the ſcence of civil diſſention, and of foreign war. I could cite ſome examples of this aſſertion, not unworthy to be compared with the greateſt models of antiquity in heroiſm. At the action of Slonim in Lithuania, fought by Prince

Prince Radzivil againſt the forces of Catharine the Second, in the autumn of 1764, two ladies of the higheſt rank appeared in the field. The one was ſiſter to Prince Radzivil, the other was his wife. The latter ſcarcely ſeventeen years of age, and newly married, fought in perſon on horſeback. With a piſtol in her hand, ſhe rode along the line, encouraging the troops to do their duty; and when the Ruſſians obtained the victory, ſhe ſaved herſelf by ſwimming her horſe acroſs the river Niemen. This Camilla only wanted a Virgil, to celebrate her courage. She was by birth a Counteſs Rzewuſki, and is ſtill alive, confined in a lonely caſtle in Lithuania, where, as I am told, ſhe is diſordered in her underſtanding. Her ſiſter-in-law is likewiſe living, and reſident in Poland. The fact itſelf, which is inconteſtibly true, makes one of the many tending to prove how widely different are the ſpirit and manners of this country, from thoſe of our own.

It was not in valour, in patriotiſm, or in military enthuſiaſm, that the Poliſh confederates

derates were deficient; but they wanted ſyſtem, ſubordination, obedience, and diſcipline. They will be, I fear, for ever deſtitute of thoſe eſſential qualities, which the Ruſſians know how to value, and to which they owe their actual ſuperiority. The Republic has at this time an army on foot, in regular pay, of about ſixteen thouſand ſoldiers; while half that number of Catharine's troops retain Poland in complete ſubjection. The Muſcovite forces, quartered in and near the metropolis, do not exceed nine hundred. It is not a little wonderful to behold a country thus ſubdued by foreign violence, diſmembered, and apparently near its diſſolution; while at the ſame time, the capital ſeems immerſed in pleaſures, or ſunk in apathy and indifference. Such a nation cannot hope to revive, and ſcarcely excites our compaſſion at its fall.

During my ſtay here, at this beautiful ſeaſon, I have viſited the environs of Warſaw on every ſide, with the advantage of Mr. Wroughton for my conductor. They are in general tame, flat, and devoid of

pictureſque

picturefque or pleafing objects. No mountains, and fcarcely even any eminences are feen. Through the midft of the folitary landfcape rolls the Viftula; but far inferior in grandeur as well as in beauty to the Rhine, the Danube, or the Elbe. In fome parts it is divided by fmall iflands; in others it flows in a collected ftream, but difcoloured, and in many places fhallow. The foil, though not unfertile, is very fandy. Hardly any marks of the vicinity of a metropolis prefent themfelves; and fo thin is the population that at a mile from the city, a ftranger would imagine himfelf in an uninhabited wild. There are neverthelefs, many very elegant palaces or country-houfes in its neighbourhood. Among the chief, muft be accounted the rival villas of Monkotow and Powonfki, which belong to the two Princeffes of Lubomirfka and Czartorifka, the Statira and Roxana of Poland, who long contended for fuperiority in the heart of Staniflaus. I was however more pleafed

pleafed to vifit Villanow, the favourite refidence of the great John Sobiefki, in which he breathed his laft. It is built in a plain, about two leagues from Warfaw, near a branch of the Viftula. The architecture is elegant and grand, having been conftructed by an Italian under Sobiefki's reign; and as it now belongs to Prince Czartorifki, it is ftill in perfect prefervation. I was particularly delighted with the gardens, which, though laid out in the antique tafte of the laft century, are very princely, full of large and venerable trees that fhed a gloom over the walks.

A circumftance which has furprifed me, is not to find among the Poles, the enthufiaftic attachment or veneration for the memory and character of John Sobiefki, which I had expected. Perhaps, however, on a fair examination, his countrymen may be competent to form a much jufter eftimate of his merit as a King, and particularly as a King of Poland, than can be done by

ftrangers.

ſtrangers. They aſſert that his government was ſtained with notorious defects, or rather vices; among which his avarice and rapacity were ſuch, that he was compared by them in theſe particulars to Veſpaſian. His uxorioufneſs became, towards the cloſe of his reign, the ſubject of many ſatirical writings and ludicrous caricatures. Nor did the qualities of his French Queen, Mary de la Grange d'Arquien, whoſe violence and intemperance of conduct were ruinous to her eldeſt ſon, juſtify ſuch a partiality for her, or ſubſervience in the King her huſband. They moreover accuſe him of having always ſacrificed the true and palpable intereſts of his ſubjects, to thoſe of his family; whoſe future elevation to the throne he preferred above every other conſideration; and which he endeavoured to effect by methods repugnant to the laws, or ſubverſive of the conſtitution, of the Poliſh Republic.

Even the moſt brilliant action of his reign, which while it elevated his character among his contemporaries, has peculiarly endeared

endeared him to posterity; I mean the succour that he gave in person to the Emperor Leopold, when Vienna was besieged by Cara Mustapha in 1683, is arraigned with severity by the Poles. They admit indeed, that his march to the banks of the Danube, was beneficial to the house of Austria; but they maintain that the act was impolitic in itself, and manifestly injurious to Poland. "The Turks," say they, "were obviously "at that time, as they still continue to be, "declining in political power: had they "even rendered themselves masters of "Vienna, they must soon have evacuated "it, and could never have maintained a "permanent footing in Germany. Sobieski "injudiciously precipitated the decline and "fall of the Ottoman Empire, by after-"wards expelling the Turks from Hungary; "while at the same time he laid the founda-"tions of the Austrian greatness, by going "to the Emperor's relief. The Austrian "Princes were much more formidable ene-"mies than the Sultans; and we have seen

"the

" the grand-daughter of Leopold, by an
" act of ſignal ingratitude, as well as folly,
" ſcarcely ninety years afterwards, join
" with Pruſſia and Ruſſia to diſmember
" Poland. It is to John Sobieſki therefore
" that we trace, and in ſome meaſure juſtly
" impute, our actual ſtate of ruin and de-
" gradation. He acted no leſs contrary
" to the intereſts of his own family, when
" towards the end of his life he entered
" into the cloſeſt connexions with Leopold,
" by marrying his eldeſt ſon Prince James
" to the Empreſs's ſiſter. The indignation
" and apprehenſions of his ſubjects, alarmed
" at ſuch an alliance with a foreign ſovereign,
" induced them to refuſe to perpetuate the
" Crown in Sobieſki's line. In our eſti-
" mate he neither merits the love of his
" country, nor the admiration of foreign
" nations."

It cannot be denied that there is ſome validity, as well as truth, in theſe accuſations, of which I was not fully aware, till after converſing with the Poles themſelves.

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We muſt nevertheleſs oppoſe to them the glorious victory of Choczim, gained by Sobieſki over the Turks; which like that of Theſeus over the Minotaur, extricated his country from a deplorable ſtate of humiliation, and freed them from an ignominious tribute to the Porte. Sobieſki's march to the relief of Vienna, is not to be tried by the principles of ordinary policy, and ſtill leſs by its effects at the diſtance of near a century. In ſnatching the capital and dominions of Leopold from the hands of Mahometans, he appeared as the champion of civilization, of Chriſtianity, and of Europe. In that character we venerate and admire him, without conſidering whether he ſufficiently attended to the remote intereſts of his Poliſh ſubjects. Nor ought we to forget his valour, his clemency, and the many great qualities that met in his compoſition. At no period of time, ſince the extinction of the houſe of Jagellon, has Poland enjoyed ſo high a national conſideration as under his reign. In how diſtinguiſhed a light

light he appeared to foreign Princes his contemporaries, we may judge by the behaviour of Charles the Twelfth; whofe admiration for him was fuch, that from that principle he would have raifed to the throne one of Sobiefki's fons, in preference to every other candidate, if he had not been prevented by infuperable obftacles. Touched with enthufiafm, he is faid to have wept as he ftood over Sobiefki's tomb at Cracow, and to have exclaimed, "So great a King "ought never to have died!" Thefe facts and reflections, if they cannot altogether obliterate his defects, muft always incline us to regard him as one of the moft illuftrious Princes of the laft, or of the prefent age.

During my ftay here I have made many inquiries relative to the "Plica Polonica," a diftemper not only extraordinary in itfelf, but afferted to be peculiar to this country; and almoft, if not abfolutely irremediable. It is, I believe, unneceffary to add that the feat of the diforder is in the hair, which

 entangles,

entangles, and by degrees forms into a solid mass resembling a mat; every separate hair becoming a blood-vessel, or tube of putrid matter. I have seen them stand out from the head, or hang in ropes from it; and nothing can be more loathsome, as well as disgusting. All attempts to shave the part, or to cut the hair, in however early a stage of the disease such operations are tried, produce either blindness, or maladies still more fatal; at least I am so assured by every body with whom I have conversed on the subject.

Upon the physical causes of the "Plica," I find very different opinions. Many persons assert that it arises from some morbid, though hitherto unascertained qualities of the air, or water in Poland. It is certain that the latter element is, generally speaking, bad, stagnant, and corrupt. But so it is likewise in many other countries of Europe and Asia, where the "Plica" is unknown. On the whole, a more general, as well as rational belief is, that its rise and

progreſs are owing only to the horrid nutriment, and inconceivable filth of the Poliſh common people. In theſe particulars they are far worſe than the Swedes, Ruſſians, or Hungarians. The diſtemper is almoſt excluſively found among the loweſt claſs; labourers, peaſants, and mendicants. It is beſides, much more frequent in the remote provinces, than in the metropolis, or its vicinity. At Cracow, during the few days of my ſtay there, I ſaw many more perſons affected with it in a greater or ſmaller degree, than I have remarked in the courſe of near eight weeks reſidence at Warſaw. Dirt, miſery, and neglect, ſeem to be the only, or principal cauſes of this tremendous ſcourge; which in a well adminiſtered country, where the cleanlineſs, comfort, and felicity of the inferior orders were objects of legiſlative attention, might probably ſoon be extirpated, or eaſily cured.

The condition of the Poliſh peaſants is unqueſtionably very calamitous: yet, many intelligent, humane, and impartial perſons with whom I have converſed here, aſſure

me, that it is not in fact so deplorable as we are led to conceive from appearances. They constitute indeed a part of the estate, as in Russia, and are sold or transferred with the land. But this humiliating servitude is accompanied with some circumstances, which counterbalance, or at least mitigate their lot. Every peasant, even the meanest, is provided by his lord with two oxen, two horses, and a cottage. In case of fire, the house is rebuilt; and if they die, the beasts are replaced by their owner. A certain fixed portion of their time and labour is appropriated to their Lords, and the remainder they are at liberty to convert to their own profit or purposes. The number of days destined for their masters, varies in different provinces, and on different estates. But in none is the proportion so severe or exorbitant, as not to leave them time sufficient to cultivate their own little land. In some parts of Poland, the peasants often become rich, or at least perfectly easy in their circumstances. Their poverty and wretchedness are not therefore, say these

persons,

persons, the inevitable and necessary result of their condition. It arises more from their national and characteristic indolence, drunkenness, and want of industry or exertion. Such are the arguments and facts which are here advanced. Admitting however all their force, they only prove how insufficient is every private or partial emancipation, in order to rouse and animate man, unless accompanied with the solid blessing of civil and political liberty. While the Polish people are altogether strangers to that distinction, they can never rise to their proper rank in society, nor be justly accounted other than slaves.

I am now about to set out for Konigsberg; and if I were only to consider Warsaw as a capital, independent of any moral or political circumstances connected with it, I should pronounce it an agreeable place of residence. Its dissimilitude to other great cities ordinarily visited, and its remote position on the eastern frontier of Europe, render it peculiarly an object of curiosity. In all the amusements of a metropolis,

tropolis, in gaiety, pleaſures, and the charms of elegant ſociety, it is ſuperior in my eſtimation to Berlin, to Stockholm, or to Copenhagen. But no portion of apathy or indifference, can enable me to ſhut my eyes on the deplorable condition of Poland, or even to forget its actual ſituation. "Homo "ſum; nihil humani a me alienum puto." He who can do otherwiſe, muſt have loſt all feelings of private compaſſion, all ſenſe of national honour, elevation, and independence. The King, however amiable in his private character, is only a victim af ſtate, reſerved in all probability for new calamities; who ſeems deſirous in the enjoyment of the preſent hour, to bury the recollection of paſt misfortunes, as well as the proſpect of future evils. Powerleſs and unſupported, he appears to reſign himſelf to his fate; and after the convulſions which he has witneſſed, to allow himſelf to be borne down the ſtream of events, without farther effort for his preſervation or extrication. The nobility, thinned by years of civil war, plundered, and degraded, yet
ſunk

ſunk in diſſipation, or ſold to foreign powers; excite only ſentiments of concern, blended with contempt. The inferior orders are hardly objects of pity: oppreſſed, enſlaved, and ſtrangers to the enlightened love of their country, which we denominate patriotiſm, thy can ſuffer little by a change of maſters: except in the ſuppreſſion of a name, they will undergo no material alteration. In ſome ſenſe their condition will even be ameliorated; ſince, whatever perſonal or domeſtic grievances they may have to ſupport, under their new Sovereigns, they will at leaſt be protected againſt foreign depredation or invaſion.

Theſe are the melancholy reflections which the preſent ſtate of Poland neceſſarily excites. Its diſmemberment can only be conſidered as the prelude to its total diſſolution; but time alone can aſcertain when, and in what manner, ſo great an event will be accompliſhed. My next letter will probably be dated from Dantzic or Thorn.

## LETTER XXII.

*Journey from Warſaw to Konigſberg.—Compariſon of Konigſberg and Berlin.—State of Dantzic.—Deſcription of Thorn.—Particulars reſpecting Copernicus.—Journey from Thorn to Breſlaw.—Remarks on that city, and on Sileſia.*

BRESLAW, *September* 15, 1778.

AFTER a ſtay of near two months at Warſaw, I left it on the 28th of July, for Konigſberg; but as no poſts are eſtabliſhed through that part of Poland, it was requiſite to hire ſeven horſes to conduct us to Willenberg, the firſt Pruſſian town, all of which were drove and managed by a ſingle poſtilion. I quitted Warſaw with a mixture of pleaſure and of regret. Its ſociety and amuſements might agreeably detain a ſtranger, if their impreſ-

ſion were not counteracted, and in a great meaſure effaced, by the national miſery and degradation to which he is hourly a witneſs. It characterizes every thing in Poland, and purſued me to the frontiers. On the evening of my departure from Warſaw, at only a few leagues diſtant, I lay down, more from neceſſity than choice, in a wretched hovel inhabited by Jews. There I paſſed the night, ſtretched on dirty ſtraw, among ducks, pigs, Poles, and Jeweſſes; devoured by vermin, and unable to ſleep on account of the heat, as well as the ſmells which annoyed me.

I reached the borders of Pruſſia on the following day, and arrived at Konigſberg, after a tedious, as well as fatiguing journey, on the firſt of Auguſt. The accommodations in the inns, or poſt houſes, are nearly ſimilar to thoſe of Poland. But in all reſpects elſe, the tranſition from one country to the other is a pleaſing one, and cannot fail to ſtrike the moſt careleſs obſerver. If Frederic oppreſſes and impoveriſhes, he at

leaſt

leaſt extends protection to his ſubjects, and allows no inferior tyrants to plunder them. In Poland, the impotence of the government, and the unreſtrained prerogatives of the nobility, ſpread univerſal ruin. I was ſurpriſed at the fertility, cultivation, and population of the greater part of the territories of his Pruſſian Majeſty through which I paſſed. At the beginning of the preſent century, Pruſſia was almoſt a deſart, ravaged by the plague, and nearly without inhabitants. Frederic William, the late King, however ſevere and almoſt ferocious he was in his private character, yet, with a policy equally enlightened and humane, reſtored its proſperity by remitting the taxes, and by timely donations of money to the people. His ſon, the great Frederic, though endowed with a mind more enlarged, and with views in many reſpects more elevated, has not followed the example. During the whole courſe of his reign, it is certain that he has manifeſted a diſlike for this part of his dominions, which he never deigns to

viſit

visit in person, and towards which he even expresses a sort of alienation. While he never fails annually to inspect Silesia, and the newly acquired provinces on either side of the Vistula, he disdainfully averts his eyes from the kingdom and people of Prussia. They feel as subjects and as men, this partiality. More than twenty years have elapsed, since he last honoured them by his presence.

Konigsberg, like Moscow and Prague, is only a capital in name, not the residence of a Court. It possesses nevertheless many points of superiority above Berlin or Potzdam, neither of which cities can compare with it in the advantages of soil and local position. The river Pregel, upon which Konigsberg is built, exceeds in magnitude the Havel and the Spree, as much as the surrounding country excels in beauty and fertility the barren sands of Brandenburg. By the Pregel, Konigsberg communicates, at a few miles below the city, with the Baltic; and its vicinity to the Russian pro-

vinces,

vinces, particularly Livonia, enables it to maintain the closest relations, either hostile or amicable, with Petersburgh. Behind it lie the northern provinces of Poland, many of whose most valuable productions are exported from Konigsberg. Berlin, as well as Potzdam, on the contrary, are destitute of commerce, and derive their principal support from the presence of the Sovereign. It must however be admitted, that these disadvantages are in some measure compensated by the central situation of the present capital. The Prussian dominions extend irregularly, with some intervals, from the Rhine and the German ocean on the west, to the frontiers of Courland and Lithuania. Berlin is likewise undoubtedly better calculated for keeping up a prompt communication with the Courts of London, Paris, and the Hague; as well as for watching every movement of the Cabinet of Vienna, and extending timely protection or assistance to the members of the Germanic System. We may therefore consider it as highly impro-

bable,

bable, that the ſeat of government will ever be transferred from Brandenburg to Pruſſia.

Continuing my journey through Elbing and Marienburg, I arrived at Dantzic, where I found my friend Mr. Wroughton, who after a reſidence of near ſeventeen years at Warſaw, was about to embark for Stockholm, being ſent as Miniſter at that Court. His parting interview with Staniſlaus was not unaccompanied with tears on both ſides, and with the moſt melancholy preſages of impending futurity. They are but too well juſtified by the poſition and proſpects of that unfortunate Prince. Dantzic, ſituated near the mouth of the Viſtula, in the moſt delicious country, and in the happieſt poſition for trade, excites at preſent only ſenſations of concern and commiſeration. It is evidently much declined in population, induſtry, and riches, ſince I laſt viſited it, only four years ago. Frederic holds it cloſely inveſted, though without the oſtenſible appearance of hoſtility; and there can be little

little queſtion, that the blockade will finally compel the inhabitants to ſurrender on terms, if not at diſcretion. They ſtill indeed, nouriſh hopes of interpoſition from Catharine, who naturally cannot ſee without jealouſy, ſuch an addition made to the political and commercial power of the King of Pruſſia. But he has always found means, either by terror or by conciliation, to mollify, and even to diſarm the Court of Peterſburgh. Maſter of the Viſtula, above and below the city of Dantzic; poſſeſſed of the ſuburbs; and gently, but ſyſtematically coercing the place, he has already deſtroyed its commerce in a great degree. The period of its political extinction may, like that of Poland, be haſtened or protracted from many cauſes: but I ſhould incline to ſuppoſe, that it cannot be very diſtant. There is no object of acquiſition or aggrandizement, upon which Frederic has kept his eye more invariably fixed; and there are few within his graſp, which will, when accompliſhed, contribute more to increaſe his impor-

importance in the ſcale of the Baltic and European powers.

In my journey from Dantzic to Thorn, where I arrived on the 5th of this month, I had an opportunity of viewing the rich and valuable tract of country, which Frederic has acquired by the partition of Poland. It extends chiefly along the banks of the Viſtula, almoſt from the gates of one city, to thoſe of the other; and no portion of the north of Europe, Livonia not excepted, is ſuperior to it in fertility of ſoil. Nearly at the ſouthern termination ſtands Thorn, as Dantzic is placed at the other extremity to the north. Both Cities have been hitherto ſpared by his Pruſſian Majeſty; but it is only a reſpite, the reſult of policy, not of moderation. Thorn, which was founded by the Teutonic knights in the thirteenth century, long continued free, under the *protection*, not the dominion, of Poland. It divided with Dantzic the trade of all the interior provinces of that country: and was, during the flouriſhing periods

riods of its government, ſo rich as well as powerful, that the city maintained a body of three thouſand regular troops in conſtant pay. At preſent, the military force is dwindled to a hundred ſoldiers. Forty Ruſſians, commanded by an enſign, have likewiſe been recently admitted into the place; chiefly with a view of preventing the Pruſſians from making any attack by open violence. Frederic will however probably attain, by more indirect and artful gradations, the object of his ambition. He knows how to reduce the city, without employing artillery, or the formality of a ſiege. He has already ſeized on the territory of Thorn, ſtraitened the acceſs to it, and effectually confiſcated their revenues, by erecting cuſtom-houſes on the Viſtula, which levy exorbitant duties on every article of importation or exportation. In fact, depopulation and decay are viſible in every ſtreet. Since 1772 the inhabitants have diminiſhed a third part, from fifteen to ten thouſand; and they are ſtill annually decreaſing. Expoſtulations

postulations and reclamations are vain against force. While England, Holland, and Russia are passive, Poland cannot protect itself. In a few years, according to all appearance, Thorn will be swallowed up in the Prussian Monarchy.

Whatever may be its political fate, the name of Thorn will always recall to the mind a man, whose deep researches ascertained the principle, only surmised by antiquity, upon which rests the Newtonian system of philosophy. Nicholas Copernicus, or Kopernic, has immortalized the place of his birth and residence. Every particular relative to him excites curiosity; and after visiting his house, as well as his tomb, I endeavoured to obtain some information concerning his family. It is not a little remarkable, that so sublime a discovery should have originated in a part of Europe the most obscure, and hardly civilized; while it escaped the finer genius of Italy, and of France. Though a part of the building

has been deſtroyed by fire, the chamber is ſtill religiouſly preſerved, in which Copernicus was born. His remains are buried under a flat ſtone, in one of the ſide aiſles of the moſt ancient church of Thorn. Above, is erected a ſmall monument, on which is painted a half-length portrait of him. The face is that of a man declined in years, pale and thin; but there is in the expreſſion of the countenance, ſomething which pleaſes, and conveys the idea of intelligence. His hair and eyes are black, his hands joined in prayer, and he is habited in the dreſs of a prieſt. Before him is a crucifix, at his foot a ſkull, and behind appear a globe and compaſs. He died in 1543; and when expiring, is ſaid to have confeſſed himſelf, as long and uniform tradition reports, in the following Latin verſes, which are inſcribed on the monument. They demonſtrate that when near his diſſolution, all cares or inquiries, except thoſe of a religious nature, had ceaſed to affect, or to agitate him.

"Non

"Non parem Pauli gratiam requiro,
"Veniam Petri neque posco; sed quam
"In crucis ligno dederat latroni,
"Sedulus oro."

Monſieur Luther de Geret, counſellor of the ſenate of Thorn, furniſhed me with ſome information relative to the illuſtrious perſon in queſtion; and as ſo little is aſcertained of his origin or family, it merits to be preſerved. "The father of "Kopernic was a ſtranger, from what part "of Europe is totally unknown. He "ſettled here as a merchant, and the ar-"chives of the city prove that he obtained "the freedom of Thorn in 1462. It ſeems "clear that he muſt have been in opulent "circumſtances, and of conſideration; not "only from the liberal education which he "beſtowed upon his ſon, but from the rank "of his wife. She was ſiſter of Luca Wat-"zelrode, biſhop of Ermeland, a prelate "deſcended from one of the moſt illuſtrious "families of Poliſh Pruſſia. The name of "the father, as well as of the ſon, was

 "Nicholas.

" Nicholas. To the patronage of his ma-
" ternal uncle, the great Copernicus was
" indebted for his ecclesiastical promotions;
" being made a prebend of the church of
" St. John at Thorn, and a canon of the
" church of Frawemberg in the diocese of
" Ermeland. Of his private life we know
" little. He did not reside here altogether,
" nor did he die here; his body having been
" brought to Thorn for sepulture from
" Ermeland, where he expired. A dysen-
" tery, accompanied with a partial palsy,
" produced his death. In his character, as
" well as in all his deportment, he was mo-
" dest, diffident, and religious. It is not
" either known or believed that he left
" behind him any natural children. But
" the family continued to reside here, as
" appears by a manuscript chronicle still
" existing, in which it is mentioned, that
" 'On the 11th of August 1601, died Mar-
" tin Kopernic, barber, of the kindred and
" posterity of Nicholas Kopernic; a young
" man, unmarried and wealthy, of an apo-
 " plectic

"plectic fit, at his garden in the ſuburbs.'
"In his perſon we apprehend the name to
"have become totally extinct."

The Viſtula oppoſite to Thorn, is broad, and acroſs it extends a bridge, over which I paſſed on my journey to this city. All Europe, I believe, cannot produce ſuch another, it being compoſed entirely of looſe planks placed on wooded piles or pillars, at a conſiderable height above the water. There is no ſort of railing or fence on either ſide; and though exceedingly long, it is ſo narrow that two carriages cannot poſſibly paſs in any part. So looſe indeed are the boards, and ſo frail is its conſtruction, that it is impoſſible to drive over it without ſhuddering. Our firſt day's journey from Thorn, lay through the newly acquired dominions of his Pruſſian Majeſty, which, previous to the partition of Poland, conſtituted part of the province of Cujavia. But, ſo unaſcertained are the limits of theſe recently ſequeſtered territories, and ſo deſirous is Frederic of extending and enlarg-

ing them, that it is difficult, if not impossible, to know what are their boundaries. His troops have either advanced or receded, during the laſt ſix years, as the reclamations of the Court of Peterſburgh have been ſtrong or gentle. I paſſed through various villages which had been occupied by by the Pruſſians, and afterwards reſtored to Poland. But the fate of that unhappy country is not yet finally decided.

Entering next day the Palatinate of Gneſna, which is ſtill avowedly ſubject to Staniſlaus, we reached a town called Chercova, towards evening, where with the utmoſt difficulty I procured a miſerable room and bed. No poſts being here eſtabliſhed, we were obliged to hire ſix very indifferent horſes belonging to Jews, conducted by two Poles, who more reſembled ſavages than poſtilions, in their attire. The morning was very rainy, and we had ſcarcely advanced a league from Chercova, when, in croſſing a bridge compoſed of looſe planks, like that of Thorn, the drivers not having

exactly taken the middle, the boards tilted up, and precipitated us into the ſtream. It was fortunately rather a torrent than a river, and as the diſtance was neither conſiderable, nor the depth great, we ſoon made our eſcape out of the carriage. The glaſſes and one of the wheels were broken by the violence of the fall; nor was it till after a conſiderable time, that with the aſſiſtance of ſeveral peaſants, the chaiſe was again raiſed up, and we proceeded ſlowly towards the next town. But the horſes having tired in the midſt of a wood, where the ſand reached nearly to the axle-trees, after many ineffectual efforts, it became neceſſary to ſend a ſervant for aſſiſtance. He returned in an hour, bringing freſh horſes, which drew us to Jaroczin, where we dried ourſelves, and found ſome refreſhment at an inn kept by Jews; a race of people to whom, notwithſtanding their extortion, travellers are under the greateſt obligation, while paſſing through this inhoſpitable portion of Europe. At Cojmin, the town in which we remained
 during

during the night, neither furniture, beds, nor provisions were to be procured in the inn, if such it could properly be called; and we were glad to lie down on the floor, littered with clean straw.

Having reached the Silesian frontiers on the ensuing morning, we gladly quitted Poland; a country in which it is difficult to imagine, or to exaggerate, the extent as well as variety of human wretchedness! Breslaw is a fine city, hardly inferior in population to Warsaw; and if we except the palaces which are to be found in the Polish capital, far superior to it in regularity, beauty, and the marks of opulence or civilization. Frederic, who knows its importance, has adopted every art in order to engage the affections of the inhabitants; and to obliterate, or insensibly efface, their ancient predilection in favor of the House of Austria. He never fails to visit them annually, distributes favors among them, and has constructed cazernes, with a view to relieve the citizens from the inconvenience

ence of lodging his ſoldiery. But it is on the tenure of arms, that he reſts his beſt hopes of the ſecurity and preſervation of Sileſia. In time of peace, a garriſon of eight battalions is uſually maintained in Breſlaw. At preſent, when he is engaged in perſon at the head of his forces in Bohemia, he has left only about four thouſand men in this city; an evident proof how little apprehenſion he entertains that the Auſtrians will attempt to inveſt it, or that they can undertake to reconquer Sileſia. I am juſt returned from looking at the ſpot rendered memorable by the battle of Breſlaw, in November 1757, which was fought partly in a plain without the place, and partly in the ſuburbs of St. Nicholas. Indeed, the whole ſurrounding country has been fertilized with human blood, in the courſe of the conteſt between Auſtria and Pruſſia, for this valuable and extenſive province.

To-morrow I ſet out for Dreſden.

## LETTER XXIII.

*Aſpect of Dreſden, and ſecurity of that capital. —Benefits reſulting to Saxony from the Pruſſian alliance.—Journey from Breſlaw to Dreſden.—Examination of the campaign of 1778. —Juſtification of the King of Pruſſia's military plan.—Anecdotes of that Monarch.—His retreat to Schatzlar.—Entrance of Prince Henry into Bohemia.—He retires into Saxony. —State of the Prince and his army, at the cloſe of the campaign.*

DRESDEN, *October* 8, 1778.

IT is ſcarcely poſſible to recognize this city, which I quitted laſt November, or to conceive the change produced in it by a few months. Dreſden then enjoyed profound tranquility; and the inhabitants, engaged in all the amuſements or occupations of Peace, looked forward to the probable

bable continuance of a long repoſe. Now, every thing announces war, and the place is converted into a garriſon. Nothing can be more ſtriking than the tranſition; nothing more animating than the ſcene. Pruſſian huſſars and Saxon Cuiraſſeers, mixed with cavalry, infantry, and dragoons, croud the ſtreets. The inns and private houſes are filled with priſoners and hoſtages, moſtly from Bohemia, who occupy the apartments to the very roof. Even the ladies talk only of war, and diſcuſs or criticiſe the military operations of the campaign, with no ſmall ability.

If we except, however, the general fermentation produced by ſo great and unexpected an event, together with ſome augmentation of the public expence, neceſſarily reſulting from an increaſed military eſtabliſhment; Dreſden has not hitherto experienced any of the calamities uſually attendant on, or characteriſtic of war. The Elector goes out to hunt, as uſual, at Moritzburg; parties of pleaſure are made at ſeveral

ſeveral leagues diſtant, without the ſlighteſt apprehenſion of danger from the Auſtrians; and all the environs of the capital are protected from inſult or devaſtation. A ſmall party of Croats, who ſwam acroſs the Elbe above the city, ſome days ago, and who as haſtily repaſſed the river again into Bohemia, are the only enemies that have yet appeared. If ſo extraordinary a degree of protection and ſecurity, at a moment like the preſent, does not prove, as it would ſeem to do, the wiſdom of the Government: it certainly demonſtrates the ſuperior advantage reſulting to Saxony from an alliance with Pruſſia, rather than with Auſtria. Only twenty-two years ago, at the commencement of the great war of 1756, before hoſtilities began, all Saxony was over-run by Frederic's troops. The electorate was ravaged, the capital bombarded and plundered, the King of Poland driven from his hereditary dominions to take refuge at Warſaw, and his army ignominiouſly made priſoners of war at Pirna; while the imperial

imperial forces were reduced to be spectators of these disasters, which they could neither prevent nor revenge.

At present, the same Prince who formerly humbled and cannonaded Dresden, extends to it complete protection. The gates are confided to Prussian troops; the money of Brandenburgh is current in all payments or contracts; and the most perfect cordiality subsists between the two sovereigns, as well as between their respective subjects. The name of Frederic, so long held in execration throughout this country, which bled under his oppression, is now pronounced with veneration. They seem only to remember his valor, skill, and military reputation. All the animosities of former reigns are now done away by present necessity; and at a time when the campaign is rapidly drawing to a close, only a few predatory incursions have disturbed the interior tranquillity of Saxony.

So inestimable an advantage is not however to be wholly ascribed either to the superior

perior activity and energy of Frederic; or ftill lefs to any incapacity, tardinefs, or inferior military ability in the Auftrian commanders. It refults in a great degree from the nature of the country itfelf, and the local pofition of Drefden in particular. Though this capital is fituated within a very few leagues of the Bohemian frontiers, yet as Saxony is bounded by mountains and defiles towards Bohemia, the approaches are difficult, hazardous, and either impeded by fnows during many months of the year, or eafily defended againft an invader. On the contrary, notwithftanding the portion of territory by which Berlin and Drefden are feparated, exceeds a hundred miles in extent; the intermediate country is almoft all flat, open, and indefenfible, except by a fuperior army, at the rifk of a general engagement. Happily therefore for Saxony, policy and intereft have dictated at the prefent moment, a clofe alliance with Pruffia; whofe Sovereign now appears as the champion of the Germanic fyftem and liberties

againft

againſt Auſtrian innovation; while he is the peculiar advocate of Saxony, the Electreſs Dowager being ſiſter and allodial heireſs to the late Elector of Bavaria. We may however venture ſafely to aſſert, that while the preſent political order of things, and the preſent balance of power remain unchanged in Germany; no advantages which the court of Vienna can hold out or offer to Saxony, will ever compenſate for the misfortunes almoſt neceſſarily reſulting from a rupture with Pruſſia. This is a truth of which the preſent wiſe Elector, inſtructed by his grand-father's experience and calamities, ſeems to have the fulleſt conviction.

I arrived here on the 19th of laſt month, after croſſing a fine part of Sileſia, and the whole Province of Luſatia, which latter country belongs to Saxony, and is in every reſpect one of the moſt beautiful of the German Empire. They derive additional charms, from the contraſt which every village and every cottage preſent to thoſe of Poland. At Parchwitz, a little town in

Sileſia,

Silesia, we were only about twelve leagues from the great Prussian army, under the King's command, in Bohemia: but Frederic neither permits visitors, nor accepts volunteers. The English are particularly obnoxious to him; and it is certain that he has never sincerely loved the nation, at any period of his reign, however policy or necessity may have driven him, under peculiar circumstances, to form alliances with Great Britain. He has not forgotten the unpaid subsidy of 1762; and he deprecates, not without some reason, the animadversions or criticisms which foreigners of our description, might presume to pass upon his military plans and conduct. "Je ne veux pas "de chambre basse au milieu de mon ar-"mée," said he, in reply to an application made him lately, to permit some English officers to serve as volunteers in his camp. Perhaps, if we rightly consider the matter, he cannot justly be blamed for his determination on this point.

Silesia and Lusatia are classic ground in modern

modern hiſtory, and may not improbably form the ſcene of ſome future epic poem, of which Frederic will be the hero, and his victories or dangers the principal ſubject. It is impoſſible not to have him conſtantly preſent to the mind and imagination, while travelling from Breſlaw to Dreſden. As well might we viſit the Troade, without recalling Hector or Achilles, at every ſtep. We drove acroſs the plain of Liſſa, where he completely defeated the Auſtrians under Prince Charles of Lorrain, in December 1757; and over that of Lignitz, where he extricated himſelf at one of the moſt perilous moments of the laſt war, in Auguſt 1760. Surrounded by three great armies, and apparently on the very point of extinction, it was only by routing Laudohn, that he there preſerved his crown and life. At the end of twenty years, it is curious to behold him and his brother Henry, again oppoſed almoſt on the ſame ground, to the ſame Generals, Lacy and Laudohn. Near Bautzen in Luſatia, I left at a ſmall diſtance,
 the

the heights memorable for the defeat of Hohkirchen in 1758, where Marſhal Keith was killed. How many penſive reflections muſt neceſſarily ariſe in the mind of his Pruſſian Majeſty, when he reviews, as he now does, the theatre of his early proweſs! With what ſenſations muſt he not reviſit the ſcene of his alternate triumphs and defeats! How frequently muſt he behold in idea, the numerous commanders who periſhed in his quarrel, and over whoſe graves he is actually contending in the evening of his reign! After eſcaping unhurt from ſo many perils, he is now leading to battle the grandſons of thoſe, who fought and conquered under his ſtandard at Mollwitz.

Dreſden appears to me ſtill more agreeable on this ſecond viſit, than at the firſt: the environs are beautiful, far ſurpaſſing in picturesque ſcenery, even thoſe of Vienna. They form a ſtriking contraſt to the tame depopulated expanſe which inveſts Warſaw, and not leſs ſo to the ſterile ſands that ſurround Berlin and Potzdam. But indepen-

tlent of local ſuperiorities, other circumſtances render it at preſent the moſt intereſting place of reſidence in Europe. The vicinity of four great armies; the number of officers of rank who are continually paſſing through the city; its ſituation, at ſo inconſiderable a diſtance from the theatre of war, that every event which happens in either camp, is known here in a few hours afterwards: all theſe things make it far more amuſing than either Berlin or Vienna, which by their more remote poſition know little except from report. Here, every movement and every action are canvaſſed with equal freedom and acuteneſs. Converſation and ſociety derive animation from the ſcene performing before us; and I ſee nothing in Dreſden which ſeems to have eſcaped the contagion, unleſs perhaps it be the Elector himſelf.

Infinite are the ſpeculations, and various the opinions, on the paſt campaign; for ſuch it may now, I believe, be termed, as the two Pruſſian armies are already retiring,

or retired out of Bohemia, and the military operations are at an end. It is not probable that the Auſtrians, who have hitherto ſyſtematically acted on the defenſive, will ſuddenly change their plan, and purſue the retreating enemy into Saxony. Certainly no campaign in the courſe of the preſent century, has more diſappointed expectation, produced fewer events, or been attended with ſo inconſiderable an effuſion of blood. There are not wanting perſons here, who criticiſe the King of Pruſſia's and Prince Henry's conduct, with extreme ſeverity. They ſay, the great Frederic in 1778, is no more himſelf, than was Prince Eugene in 1734. They accuſe him of wanting enterprize, of fearing to commit his reputation to hazard, and of allowing his troops to waſte away in inaction. "After paſſing "many months," ſay they, "in remon-"ſtrances and delays relative to the Bava-"rian ſucceſſion, which he ought to have "employed in arms, and thereby giving "the Auſtrians time to prepare for his re-"ception,

" ception, he at length enters Bohemia.
" What has he done? Has he opened a
" way to Prague? Has he given battle to
" Joſeph the Second? Did he vanquiſh the
" obſtacles oppoſed to his junction with
" Prince Henry? No! He could not effect
" any one of theſe objects. After ravaging
" and deſolating ſome of the northern circles
" of Bohemia, from which he has only car-
" ried off a few hoſtages; he and his bro-
" ther, alike fruſtrated in all their views,
" have already fallen back upon Saxony and
" Sileſia. Far from attacking the enemy's
" lines, behind the Elbe, at Konigingratz,
" as he did at Prague, at Torgau, and on
" ſo many other occaſions, during the great
" war of ſeven years; we have neither ſeen
" a ſiege, nor even witneſſed a ſkirmiſh
" which deſerves the name. The campaign
" is cloſed; and the Emperor, who never
" yet was preſent at a battle, nor beheld
" an army, except at the ceremony of a
" review, has foiled, and obtained a nega-
" tive victory, over the greateſt comman-

 " ders

" ders of the preſent age. If the Prince
" Royal had led on the Pruſſians, we
" ſhould have been more ſucceſsful, and at
" leaſt we ſhould have given battle to the
" enemy. Frederic has ſurvived himſelf!
" Ce n'eſt plus que l'ombre du grand Fre-
" deric," as he himſelf in his Memoirs, has
" ſaid of Prince Eugene in his laſt cam-
" paign. He is no longer the ſame active
" hero who fought at Roſbach, at Torgau,
" and at Cunerſdorf."

Such are the animadverſions paſſed on his conduct, by thoſe who cenſure the preſent campaign. I confeſs that the facts and arguments are at firſt ſight calculated to make an impreſſion; but on examination they will be found, in my opinion, no leſs unjuſt than unmerited. It is true that the campaign, which has been ſterile in great events, offers nothing brilliant to the imagination. Frederic has neither atchieved the conqueſt of Bohemia, nor the capture of Prague. I will even admit that his antagoniſt, by compelling him to retire into his

his own dominions, has acquired a degree of reputation at his expence. But allowing theſe principles, where has been the want of ability, enterprize, or ardour, in his Pruſſian Majeſty? Let us examine diſpaſſionately.

The war originates in the ſeizure of a part of Bavaria by the Court of Vienna, upon very problematical grounds of right or juſtice. If Frederic had not remonſtrated; if he had inſtantly invaded Bohemia or Moravia, as he did in 1756, inſtead of ſending reclamations and manifeſtos to Maria Thereſa, he might probably have acquired more laurels; but he certainly would not have proved to his ſubjects and to all Europe, that he is animated by no other motive than the protection of the Germanic liberties. Such a cauſe, and ſuch a conviction, outweigh in their effect upon mankind, the moſt brilliant victory. After fully demonſtrating his moderation and anxious wiſh for peace, he at length has recourſe to arms. Entering Bohemia on the Sileſian quarter, he advances

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into the kingdom, and finds Joſeph the Second, with Lacy at his ſide, entrenched behind the Elbe, in an inacceſſible camp, on the heights of Konigingratz; having under his command not leſs than a hundred thouſand ſoldiers. Prince Henry of Pruſſia penetrates at the ſame time into Bohemia on another quarter, where he meets Laudohn advantageouſly poſted, who impedes his further progreſs, or his approach towards the King. Joſeph on his part declines, and even prohibits all offenſive or hazardous operations, with the moſt unremitting ſolicitude, though far ſuperior to the Pruſſians in force. Flanked by Laudohn on his left, and by Haddick on his right, while he was ſupplied with proviſions from his own dominions in his rear; how could Frederic, under ſuch diſadvantages, and at every poſſible riſk, force the Emperor to a general action? That he did not want the inclination, had it been practicable without the greateſt temerity, is inconteſtible, ſince he made every effort for the purpoſe, but

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in vain. The Emperor's determination to bear all insults, even to see his provinces ravaged and ransomed, rather than hazard an engagement, was systematic and insuperable.

About the middle of August, while Frederic was encamped at Jaromirz in Bohemia, he rode out one morning with his nephew, the Hereditary Prince of Brunswic, in order to reconnoitre the enemy's position, and to judge whether there was no means of compelling the Austrians to a battle. "Eh "bien, mon neveu," said he, after long examining their camp with his glass at his eye, "qu'en dites vous? N'y a t'il pas "moyen d'attaquer ces gens la?"—"Oui, "Sire" answered the Prince, "il y a bien "moyen; et je repondrai à votre Majesté "de forcer les lignes, et d'entrer dans les "tranchées l'epée à la main. Nous rem-"porterons la victoire; mais la moitié de "votre armée sera flambée." The King was too wise to wish to purchase even victory at so dear a rate, which, besides the vast

effusion

effusion of blood, must have incapacitated him for effectually profiting of it in an enemy's country. Content with having cooped up and immured the Imperial army in their camp, though superior in numbers to his own; after having subsisted his troops for two months at the expence of Bohemia, finding it impossible to surmount the impediments to a junction with his brother, he gave orders to fall back to Schatzlar, near the frontiers of Silesia.

Never was retreat conducted with more consummate skill. It was, by the universal testimony of Prussian and Saxon officers, the triumph of the military art; every movement having been made with the accuracy of machinery, unaccompanied by hurry, embarrassment or confusion. Lacy vainly attempted to take advantage of the King's situation, by attacking his rear: not a man was lost in his retreat, nor the slightest advantage gained over the Prussian troops. The Prince Royal of Prussia eminently distinguished himself on the occasion; and

Frederic

Frederic was ſo charmed with the diſplay of cool intrepidity, joined to military talents in his conduct, that forgetting his uſual coldneſs towards the Heir Apparent, he embraced him in preſence of all the Generals. "Vous n'eſtes plus mon neveu," ſaid he, "vous eſtes aujourd'huy mon fils." At Schatzlar the King ſtill continued to maintain himſelf ſeveral weeks, in defiance of the Auſtrians; deſolating the northern circles of Bohemia, and carrying off contributions. He is now fallen back into his own dominions, or into thoſe of Saxony, where he remains; and from whence, ſhould the war continue, he will be able to open the campaign early in the enſuing ſpring, under more favourable circumſtances.

After this ſhort, but accurate ſtatement, I leave you to decide, whether his enemies can juſtly compare him to Prince Eugene in his decline, or aſſert with reaſon, that he has ſurvived his talents. Let us now examine Prince Henry's conduct, who commanded the other Pruſſian army; and who, on

on entering the territories of the enemy, found insuperable obstacles to his progress, or to his effecting a junction with the King. So completely had the Austrians occupied the passes, by which alone it was supposed he could penetrate into Bohemia, that they considered it impossible for him to overcome the difficulties in his way. It was only by profiting of their confidence in their own strength and precautions, as well as by movements equally rapid, masterly, and unexpected, that he entered the circle of Leutmeritz, through defiles either unknown to the Austrians themselves, or regarded by them as impervious to a body of troops. By this able manœuvre, he made prisoners a corps of fourteen hundred men stationed at Gabel, chiefly Italians, who were surprized at finding themselves invested and captured, before they knew or suspected the approach of an enemy.

Prince Henry, while advancing towards Prague, was nevertheless obliged to contend with impediments in themselves almost in-

surmountable

furmountable. Laudohn, and Prince Charles Lichtenftein, who were oppofed to him, aftonifhed that he had rendered abortive all their precautions, fell back, and allowed him to reach Budin. During the march, he remained for three days feparated from his artillery; a circumftance of which if the Imperial Generals had been apprized, they doubtlefs might have attacked him with almoft a certainty of fuccefs. Laudohn, probably by the Emperor's immediate direction, contented himfelf with adopting a defenfive plan, calculated to check the Prince's further progrefs. In order to attain this end, he occupied a campt at Munchengratz, fo ftrong as to be inattackable; and fo fituated, as while it effectually covered the capital of Bohemia, to cut off all means of junction, or even of communication, between the King and his brother. Of the numerous couriers who were fent under every poffible difguife, from one to the other, fuch was the vigilance of Laudohn, that none ver fucceeded in reaching his

his deſtination, or conveying the ſlighteſt intelligence of their mutual operations.

Thus foiled in his endeavours to form a junction with the great Pruſſian army commanded by Frederic, and unable to force Laudohn in his lines, or to turn his flank; Prince Henry had no reſource except to retire out of Bohemia. He has done ſo unmoleſted by the enemy, and yeſterday reached Giſhibel, a village belonging to Saxony, not far from Pirna. The difficulties with which he had to ſtruggle in his retreat, ariſing from the badneſs of the roads, the mountainous nature of the country, and the advanced ſeaſon of the year, were ſuch as could only have been ſurmounted by equal fortitude, perſeverance, and ſkill. But, how a general ſuch as we know Laudohn to be, ſo quick to perceive, and ſo rapid to profit of the errors or embarraſſments of his adverſary, ſhould have allowed the Prince to evacuate Bohemia, without falling upon his rear, we are here at a loſs to conceive. It is certain that we do not recognize in his late

late conduct, the decision and velocity that characterized him at Glatz, at Landshut, and on so many other occasions where he has immortalized himself. Encumbered as Prince Henry was with baggage, and dragging after him a train of heavy artillery, it would have been almost impossible to prevent some loss or disaster. He has carried off immense contributions, and has filled this city with hostages or prisoners of war. I will not however attempt to deny or to conceal, that some degree of dissatisfaction is known to exist between Frederic and his brother, who partly impute to each other the failure of more complete success in their operations. It is likewise said, that the King highly disapproves the spirit of play which has pervaded the camp, and even the tent of the Prince. We know that he on his part is sullen, gloomy, and out of humour. He remains encamped at Ottersdorf, a few miles distant, and permits his general officers to visit Dresden, but declines to do so himself. Platen and Mellen-

dorf

dorf are now here. The cavalry, Saxon and Pruſſian, is deplorably ruined, owing to the neceſſity of harneſſing all the horſes, in order to draw the artillery out of the Bohemian defiles. The road from hence to Otterſdorf, is ſtrewed with the bodies of horſes, either dead, or expiring of fatigue and ill uſage: but the infantry is in good condition, and has comparatively ſuffered little from the campaign. Here I ſhall cloſe the preſent letter, and remain,

Yours.

# LETTER XXIV.

*Review of the Saxon History.—Augustus the Second and Third.—Reign, death, and character of Frederic Christian.—Character and anecdotes of the reigning Elector of Saxony, Frederic Augustus.—Electress of Saxony.—Prince Charles.—Anecdotes of the Electress Dowager.*

DRESDEN, *October* 13th, 1778.

BEFORE I quit this capital and country, to proceed to Ratiſbon and Munich, it is natural that I ſhould ſay ſomething of the Sovereign and the Court of Saxony. During a period of near ſeventy years, while the Electors were Kings of Poland, that Crown, though it continued to be nominally elective, was almoſt conſidered as become hereditary in the Saxon line. It may however be juſtly doubted, whether except the title and honors of King, any real advantage accrued to Saxony, from

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the elevation of their Princes to the Polish throne. Augustus the Second expended a great part of his Electoral revenues at Warsaw, either in maintaining himself on that tottering and venal eminence, from which he was once driven by Charles the Twelfth, or in purchasing the suffrages of the principal nobles and ecclesiastics in favour of his son. His numerous gallantries, his expensive taste, his extraordinary vigour of body, and his munificence, have rendered Augustus the Second not a little distinguished in the history of the present century. Even his natural sons conduced to immortalize their father. Marshal Saxe, who was one of them, deservedly fills perhaps a more distinguished place in the annals of time, than his legitimate brother, Augustus the Third, King of Poland. His mother was the beautiful Countess of Konigsmark, whose brother, the ill-fated lover of Sophia Dorothea, Princess of Zell, perished at Hanover, in the manner which I have already related.

Augustus

Augustus the Second died only forty-five years ago, at Warsaw, of a mortification in his foot, caused by a blow which he gave himself, when stepping into his coach. The disease originated in a morbid habit of body, as two of his toes had been already amputated, previous to the accident which terminated his life. He was certainly an amiable and accomplished Prince, brave, humane, generous, and endowed with talents for captivating mankind. But, never was any Court more dissolute than that of Dresden under his reign. What shall we say of a Sovereign, who, as Lady Wortley Montague assures us, and she knew him personally; wooed the Countess of Cosel, by throwing at her feet a bag containing ten thousand Louis d'ors, with one hand; while with the other he broke a horse-shoe, and flung the pieces on the ground, as a proof that his strength was not inferior to his generosity! What are we to think of a man, who on hearing that the regent Duke of Orleans had expired in the arms of Ma-

dame de Valori; lifting his eyes and hands to Heaven, exclaimed, "Ah? que je meurs "de la mort de ce juste?" It is the King of Prussia himself, who relates this anecdote of Augustus; the wit of which is far exceeded by its indecency and profligacy.

Notwithstanding the vices of his administration, the enormous waste of money which the purchase of his Polish kingdom occasioned, and the devastation of Saxony committed by Charles the Twelfth of Sweden; who, after dethroning Augustus, allowed his victorious troops to live at free quarters in the Electorate;—notwithstanding these misfortunes of his reign, his memory is dear to the Saxons, who remember only his magnificence, his affability, and the splendor of his Court. The late King of Poland, Augustus the Third, bore no resemblance to his father in the principal features of his character. He inherited indeed much of the bodily strength, but not the activity, ambition, or address of his predecessor. Mild, indolent, and destitute of

energy, he was not formed to contend with ſo formidable a neighbour and antagoniſt as the preſent King of Pruſſia. Calculated for times of peace and repoſe, his abilities were unequal to ſituations of emergency or difficulty. In the protection of all the arts, and in the gratification of his paſſion for muſic as well as painting, he knew hardly any bounds. During more than twenty years, from his acceſſion in 1733, to the commencement of the great war in 1756, no Prince in Europe could vie with him in theſe reſpects. Happy in the midſt of his numerous family, the illegitimate branches of which were ſcarcely leſs dear to him than his own ſons; occupied in forming the famous "Gallery of Dreſden," or in aſſembling the fineſt orcheſtra that Germany had ever ſeen: Auguſtus devolved the cares of government on his Miniſter and favourite, Count Bruhl.

But the calm ſo long enjoyed by Saxony, uſhered in a period of unprecedented calamity. Relying on his cloſe connections and alliances

alliances with the House of Austria, he imprudently entered into the secret machinations, which Maria Theresa, supported by Elizabeth, Empress of Russia, set on foot to reduce the power, and to divide the dominions of the family of Brandenburgh. Frederick having anticipated the execution of the plan, by measures of equal vigour and decision, Saxony became the sacrifice to Augustus's want of foresight, and to his injudicious plans of aggrandizement. The remainder of his life was only a tissue of misfortune, aggravated by every species of disgrace. He saw Dresden laid almost in ashes, his enemy master of the Electorate, his army reduced to surrender at discretion, and his own person scarcely secure among his elective subjects at Warsaw. His wife, the late Queen of Poland, daughter of the Emperor Joseph the First, a Princess of examplary piety and virtue; endeavoured to oppose a feeble and ineffectual barrier to Frederic's military severity. Her days were embittered, and her end accelerated by the Prussian

Pruſſian exactions, of which, for ſeveral years, ſhe was a reluctant ſpectatreſs. Hardly was Auguſtus reſtored to his capital and hereditary dominions, by the peace of 1762, when death terminated his reign. Saxony, at his deceaſe, exhibited a deplorable picture of depopulation, miſery, and deſolation, not to be exceeded by any thing of which the preſent age furniſhes an example.

His eldeſt ſon and ſucceſſor would nevertheleſs, unqueſtionably have been elected King of Poland, if, by a ſingular fatality, he had not followed his father to the grave, in the ſpace of a few weeks. So deep a root had the Saxon Family taken in that country, by the almoſt uninterrupted poſſeſſion of the Crown ever ſince the deceaſe of John Sobieſki; that neither the intrigues, nor the armies of Catharine, could probably have raiſed any other candidate to the throne. But the forms neceſſary, previous to the election of a Sovereign, and the time that elapſed from the demiſe of Auguſtus,

to the period of filling the vacancy as prescribed by the Polish constitution, removed the only obstacle to the Empress's views. The new Elector was carried off by the small-pox, at Dresden, in the vigour of his age, on the 17th of December 1763, after a reign of only ten weeks. His premature end overturned all the projects of the Court of Saxony, and enabled Catharine, in defiance of every impediment, to confer the Crown of Poland on Count Poniatowski.

Those persons who were acquainted with the late Elector, Frederic Christian, assure me that he was an enlightened, and an amiable Prince. His parts were not brilliant, but his judgment was sound, his understanding solid, and his mind enlarged. Like all his predecessors since Augustus the Second, who in order to attain the Crown of Poland, renounced the protestant tenets, he had been educated in, and he professed, the Catholic Faith. But his adherence to the Romish communion, did not prevent him from giving the most conspicuous demonstrations

ſtrations of a liberal mind. During his ſhort reign, he conferred offices of the higheſt truſt indiſcriminately on his ſubjects of both perſuaſions; and immediately after his acceſſion, he began by naming four Lutheran "Dames d'Honneur" to attend on the Electreſs. This innovation in the Court of etiquette, the reſult of a ſuperior underſtanding, was ſoon ſuppreſſed on his deceaſe.

In his perſon and figure, the late Elector was eminently unfortunate. His face, arms, and breaſt, were well proportioned, and when ſeated at a table, he preſented the appearance of a handſome man; but from his waiſt downwards, he was deformed, his thighs and legs being crooked and entirely contracted. Many reaſons have been aſſigned for ſo unhappy a conformation. The moſt common, and that which has obtained general belief in Saxony is, that his mother, the late Queen of Poland, while breeding, was ſo affected at the ſight of a deer, which being ſhot in the haunch, was dragged before

fore her, the legs trailing along the ground and bleeding: that it occafioned the deformity of her fon. It is difficult to believe, but more difficult to difprove, fo extraordinary a ftory. Whatever was the caufe, the effect was irremediable, and baffled all medical fkill. Baths of every kind were reforted to in vain, for the reftoration of his limbs; and phyficians from every part of Europe were confulted to no purpofe. The Elector remained a cripple during his whole life.

To Frederic Chriftian fucceeded his eldeft fon, a minor of thirteen; but the adminiftration of Saxony was intermediately committed to Prince Francis Xavier, his uncle. The reigning Elector, Frederic Auguftus, is in the prime of his age, not having yet completed his twenty-eighth year. Of a middle fize, inclining rather to fhort than tall, his limbs are neither active nor mufcular, though he poffeffes found health and a ftrong conftitution. Over his whole figure there is diffufed fomething, eafier perceived than defcribed, altogether

 deftitute

destitute of grace, and deficient in elegance or dignity. Nor are his manners calculated to compensate for the want of personal accomplishments. In his address he is shy, distant, and reserved. Coldness and inanimation characterize his behaviour, pervade his conversation, and accompany all his actions. He displays none of the gracious and communicative disposition, which almost equally characterizes in different ways, his three cotemporaries, Frederic the Second, Stanislaus, and the present Emperor.

If nature has denied him these external graces of figure and deportment, she has made him amends by conferring on him more solid endowments. In application, strength of mind, and talents for government, the Elector is by no means deficient. His reign has hitherto been a happy period for his subjects, whose true interests he has discernment to perceive, and whose felicity he has sufficient principle to consult, in preference to every other object of pursuit. It is not the aggrandizement of his house, the acqui-

acquiſition of a precarious foreign crown, or the extenſion of his dominions; but the ſecurity, protection, and renovation of Saxony, which regulate his ſyſtem of policy. Rigid in his morals, and tinctured with bigotry on articles of religious belief, he repreſſes with ſeverity the ſlighteſt deviations from propriety of conduct. No men or women of diſſolute characters will ever attain to favor or preferment in Saxony, under the preſent reign. In gallantry, whether of mind or perſon, he is totally deficient; and towards the ſex, conſidered as objects of paſſion, he is peculiarly cold. The Elector, though young, never entertained a miſtreſs, nor has he hitherto had any children, legitimate or illegitimate. He ſeems to be in a great meaſure inſenſible to the pains, as well as the pleaſures of love; an exemption which perhaps equally entitles him to our envy, and our compaſſion.

Frederic Auguſtus has no taſte for ſplendor, or the luxurious magnificence of a court, like his two predeceſſors the Kings of

of Poland. All his amuſements are ſober, temperate, and confined to a ſmall number of perſons. He dances, it is true, at the court-balls in Carnival, and is fond of that diverſion, if he can with propriety be ſaid to be fond of any thing. Twice every week he goes to hunt at the palace of Moritzburg; but he is accompanied on theſe occaſions, by ſcarcely any attendants or courtiers. For the fine arts, he betrays no partiality; and though the celebrated gallery of paintings, collected by his grandfather Auguſtus the Third at an immenſe expence, communicates with, and is in effect a part of the Electoral Palace, he rarely viſits it. That noble repoſitory of the works of the great maſters, Italian and Flemiſh, is left for the inſpection of ſtrangers. His Pruſſian Majeſty, on the contrary, when maſter of Saxony during the late war, found leiſure amidſt dangers internal and foreign, to paſs ſome hours every week, in contemplating the models of taſte and excellence aſſembled at Dreſden.

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The Elector, though not distinguished either by his patronage of Science, or his passion for the arts, is nevertheless a prince of a cultivated understanding. In natural philosophy and various other branches of knowledge, he has made considerable progress. He is musical, and performs with execution on the harpsichord: yet even his musical pleasures are solitary; and he rarely, if ever, permits any one to be present on those occasions. For military affairs he has never manifested any talent or inclination. He wears indeed frequently an uniform; but though the parade where his guards and troops exercise daily, is situated within a hundred paces of the palace, he scarcely ever appears there, and contents himself with inspecting them from the windows of his apartments. Had he felt a disposition to signalize himself in the field, he might have found an occasion at this moment, when an Emperor and a King are both at the head of their respective armies, the one to attack, and the other to defend his Electorate!

torate! It is well known that Prince Henry of Pruſſia, a commander ſcarcely inferior to any of the preſent age, and of years ſo much more advanced, offered to ſerve under the Elector, if he had been diſpoſed to take the field. The propoſal was declined.

Count Marcolini, his only favourite, and his conſtant companion, is an Italian, about five-and-forty years of age, who having been formerly a page of honour in the Court of Saxony, became known to Frederic Auguſtus at an early period of life. Of a diſpoſition amiable and conciliating, he has improved the opportunities which his place and ſituation afforded, to attain the higheſt degree of perſonal favour with his maſter. He has in fact neither rival nor competitor, for the eminence which he occupies. Count Stutterheim fills the employment, and performs the functions of firſt miniſter; but Marcolini, without the oſtentation or reſponſibility of office, poſſeſſes no inconſiderable ſhare of political influence.

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In whatever point of view we furvey the Elector, his leading characteriftic is a tranquillity of mind approaching to apathy. Thofe who know him moft intimately, affert that he is never greatly agitated by any purfuit or occupation. If he hunts, it is not fo much from a natural ardour for the chace, as from conviction that the exercife is falutary and beneficial to his health. He neither takes a lively intereft in his palaces, nor in his horfes, nor in the company of ladies, nor in the converfation of his courtiers. Of courfe, he is feldom betrayed into thofe weakneffes or errors which originate from fenfibility, the chief fource of refined gratification. Diftant and retired, he neither infpires warm attachment in others, nor is he animated with ftrong affection for thofe about him. A narrow and confined education, joined to elevated ideas of his own rank, have added ftrength to his habitual referve. But his defects are private and perfonal, negative rather than affirmative, and terminating in himfelf: while his

 virtues

virtues which are public, diffuse happiness through his dominions. He will not indeed, be remembered in future ages, by his protection of talents, by his skill in tournaments, by his valour, or the magnificence of his disposition, like Augustus the Second. But his reign will probably be recollected and commemorated as an æra, from which Saxony, plunged into every species of misfortune by the extravagance or incapacity of its Princes, revived under the wise and paternal government of an economical and pacific Sovereign.

The reigning Electress, his wife, Maria Amelia Augusta, is of the Palatine House of Deux-Ponts, and was born in 1752. Her person is tall, elegant, and dignified, though she cannot with propriety be termed handsome, her face being marked with the small-pox. She has fine hair in prodigious quantity, a fair complexion, eyes by no means destitute of expression, and an interesting countenance. Her manner, which impresses at first with the idea of distance and reserve, becomes on nearer acquaint-

ance, easy, affable, and pleasing. In conversation she is lively and communicative; without nevertheless possessing either superior talents, or a very cultivated understanding. Her life, like that of Princesses in general, is uniform, and destitute of gaiety or variety. She goes indeed regularly to the comedy, to the chace, and to the country: but the Elector commonly accompanies her on these occasions, which can scarcely be denominated parties of pleasure. The Electress has little taste for sedentary amusements; a circumstance the more perhaps to be regretted, as she passes many of her private hours in solitude or seclusion, without company of any kind. Music and painting form her principal resources. Over her husband she is supposed to possess no political influence; and their marriage, which hitherto has not been productive of issue, may be considered rather as an alliance of state, than as an union of mutual inclination.

Her sterility must be regarded as more than an ordinary misfortune to the Elector, and to Saxony; since Prince Charles, who is

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his next brother, and his preſumptive heir, labours under all the varieties of deformity which can meet in the human frame. I have the honour to know him, and to ſee him frequently. Scarron himſelf muſt have been handſome, compared to Prince Charles of Saxony; whoſe face, hands, body, legs, and feet, are all more or leſs diſtorted. Incapable of walking, ſtanding, or mounting a horſe, on account of his numerous infirmities, he is wheeled about from one apartment to another. Under ſuch an accumulation of corporeal ailments, he is nevertheleſs chearful, converſible, and almoſt gay. One ſhould be tempted to ſuppoſe by his converſation and deportment, that he is not unhappy. From neceſſity, not leſs than from inclination, he has cultivated his mind, the only part of his formation which admits of improvement. It is ſingular, but true, that he was not born in a ſtate of deformity; he gradually became ſo at the age of eleven or twelve, previous to which period his limbs were apparently well made: he is now about

 ſix-and

ſix-and-twenty. Such a perſon ſeems to be incapacitated by his infirmities for marriage. Yet, as the Elector has hitherto no children, and as the ſucceſſion would by his death devolve on Prince Charles, the Electreſs Dowager his mother wiſhes to procure him a bride. For the honour of human nature and of wedlock, it is to be hoped that the project will never be carried into execution.

As there remain, beſides the Elector and Prince Charles, two younger brothers, the Princes Anthony and Maximilian, who have already attained to manhood, and who labour under no bodily defects; ſuch a meaſure can hardly be eſteemed neceſſary in order to prevent the extinction of the Saxon male line in the preſent Houſe. No event can indeed be apparently more improbable at this time, than ſuch a failure. But, ſhould it ever take place, contrary to all appearances; and of courſe, the reigning, or "Albertine branch," become extinct; the Electoral dignity, and the Saxon dominions, (after paſſing through the ſurviving

ſons of Auguſtus the Third, if ſuch there were remaining alive,) would revert to the elder, or "Erneſtine branch," which is now reigning at Weymar. Germany would then witneſs one of the moſt extraordinary events which its internal hiſtory and conſtitution preſent: namely, the reſtoration of the deſcendants of John Frederic, Elector of Saxony, to their ancient patrimonial title and territories. He was deſpoiled and degraded after the battle of Muhlberg, by the Emperor Charles the Fifth, above two centuries ago. You may probably recollect that the virtuous and unfortunate Prince to whom I allude, for his adherence to the Proteſtant Faith, no leſs than for his generous reſiſtance to the Imperial power, which then menaced the total extinction of the Germanic liberties; was deprived of his Electoral dominions and dignity, which Charles conferred on his couſin Maurice, and on his male deſcendants. In their line it ſtill continues: but by ſubſequent ſtipulations it was nevertheleſs ſettled, that if

they ever ſhould become extinct, the poſterity of John Frederic ſhould be again reinſtated in their original honors and poſſeſſions. This is the caſe, which though highly improbable, would be realized, ſhould the preſent Elector and his three brothers die without male iſſue.

The Electreſs Dowager, Maria Antonietta, mother to the four Princes abovementioned, may be denominated in every ſenſe, a diſtinguiſhed woman. She is daughter to that moſt unfortunate Prince, Charles the Seventh, who, from Elector of Bavaria, was raiſed by France to the Imperial dignity, in the year 1741. Driven by the forces of Maria Thereſa from his hereditary dominions, and compelled to take refuge in an inn at Francfort, while Munich was in the hands of the Auſtrians; he ſoon afterwards terminated his days, the victim of French policy, no leſs than of his own ambition. His daughter, of whom I now ſpeak, is about fifty-four; and, if I may judge from her preſent infirmities, as well as from her broken

broken ſtate of health, does not promiſe to attain to a very advanced age. In her perſon, even when young, ſhe never can have been agreeable. Her figure is ſhort, her face red, retaining the traces of the ſmall-pox, and little calculated to procure admiration. Yet, in defiance of ſo may natural diſadvantages, an air of ſenſe and intelligence illuminates her countenance. Few Princeſſes poſſeſs more knowledge of the world, more gracious manners, or greater powers of pleaſing in converſation. Miſtreſs of various languages, acquainted with the human heart, and ingratiating in her addreſs, ſhe conduces not a little to render the Saxon Court agreeable to ſtrangers. Her ambition is not inferior to her political talents; but ſhe has at preſent no field on which to exert either, as her ſon the Elector no longer conſults her on matters of a public nature, nor allows her to interfere in ſtate affairs. Fruſtrated of the Crown of Poland by her huſband's premature deceaſe, at the moment

when ſhe ſeemed about to be raiſed to that throne: and now removed from the active ſcenes of ſtate, ſhe happily finds reſources in her love of letters. A patroneſs of the Arts, ſhe has adorned her mind by the peruſal of the works of the fineſt writers in moſt European languages. I was ſurpriſed to find her ſo well verſed in ours; and I have too many obligations to her, for the diſtinguiſhed manner in which ſhe has treated me during my ſtay here, not to ſpeak of her with a degree of gratitude that I am aware is allied to partiality.

It is with regret that I again quit Saxony: but my reſidence at Dreſden now draws to a cloſe, the ſeaſon of the year compelling us to ſet out for Munich. We would willingly paſs through Bohemia; but it is ſtill a ſcene of war, and though hoſtilities between the great armies have altogether ceaſed, there is no communication open from this city to Prague. Under theſe circumſtances, we muſt therefore of neceſſity

take

take our courſe through the Upper Palatinate, and Ratiſbon. Sir John Stepney, who to all the accompliſhments of a gentleman, adds the hoſpitality and kindneſs of a friend, accompanies us to Freyberg. I need not remind you that he is his Majeſty's miniſter at the court of Saxony; and on both my viſits to this capital, his attentions have left the deepeſt impreſſion on my mind.

## LETTER XXV.

*State of Ratiſbon.—Bavaria,—Aſpect of the Country.—Munich.—Character and anecdotes of the Elector Palatine, Charles Theodore.—Explanation of the pacific ſyſtem adopted by that Prince.—Court of Munich.*

MUNICH, *November* 3, 1778.

IN my way from Dreſden to this capital, I paſſed near a week at Ratiſbon, which city, without being in a ſtate of ſiege, is nevertheleſs as completely inveſted at preſent by the troops of Maria Thereſa and Joſeph, as Dantzic is by the forces of Frederic. Ratiſbon is built on the ſouthern bank of the Danube, oppoſite to which, on the northern ſide, ſtands the little town of Amhof, at the diſtance of ſcarce a hundred yards. Two bridges, one of ſtone, the other of wood, connect them, the river being

being divided into two ſtreams at the ſpot. We were ſtopped on our arrival, by the Auſtrian ſoldiers poſted at Amhof; of which place the Court of Vienna took poſſeſſion in common with the reſt of Lower Bavaria, upon the deceaſe of the late Elector, about ten months ago. It muſt be confeſſed that Ratiſbon is thereby placed in the moſt critical and perilous ſituation, ſurrounded on every ſide by the Imperial troops, who may, at any moment, enter the city, and ſequeſter it in virtue of ſome antiquated pretenſion. After the recent ſeizure of ſo conſiderable a portion of the Bavarian ſucceſſion, what part of the German Empire can be regarded as ſecure? The terror occaſioned by it, has already operated univerſally; and it has even been agitated to remove the Diet from Ratiſbon, where that aſſembly has been held for ages, to ſome other place more protected from violence. The reſult of the preſent war between Auſtria and Pruſſia, will determine how far the Ger-

manic

manic ſyſtem is, or is not likely to continue unviolated; a queſtion which can only be decided by arms.

From the gates of Ratiſbon to thoſe of Landſhut, a ſpace of more than fifty miles, the whole intermediate country is occupied by Maria Thereſa's troops, and become in all reſpects incorporated with her other vaſt dominions. It is a very fertile portion of Bavaria, producing immenſe crops of grain; and muſt prove, if finally retained by her, an ineſtimable acquiſition of power and reſources to the Houſe of Auſtria. The population is not inferior to the exuberance of the ſoil; and when its local poſition is conſidered, which protects the weſtern frontier of the Empreſs Queen's territories, where ſhe is moſt vulnerable, I am not ſurpriſed that Pruſſia and Saxony have oppoſed her acquiring ſo important an augmentation to her ſtrength. At Landſhut commence the actual dominions of the Elector Palatine, as Duke of Bavaria, which continue uninterruptedly

ruptedly from thence to Munich; but it is by no means ſo fine a tract as that recently ſeized on by the Court of Vienna.

The Bavarian peaſants appear to me a race of men far inferior to the Saxons in bodily formation, and not leſs in the plenty and riches of their farms, as well as in cultivation of manners. Superſtition and poverty, blended with diſtreſs, are viſible in every village, and almoſt in every countenance. Such a contraſt may partly reſult from phyſical cauſes, but muſt be principally attributed to the genius of the government. The approaches to Munich bear no ſimilarity, either in beauty or in fertility, to the environs of Dreſden. For many miles before I arrived here, the country, which is level, exhibits few marks either of induſtry or of riches. The city of Munich itſelf, though large, handſome, and full of elegant buildings, wants the vivacity and gaiety of the capital of Saxony. It muſt however be admitted, that the mountains of the Tyrol form a ſublime and pictureſque

object,

object, extending across the whole horizon to the south, at the distance of twenty leagues, their summits covered with perpetual snow.

It is not a little curious and striking, to find Munich in a state of profound repose, the Court occupied in amusements, and no indication or appearance of war, at a moment when Austria, Prussia, and Saxony, are contending for a part of Bavaria itself. The Elector Palatine, who as it would seem, should, not less from inclination than from necessity, have drawn his sword, in order to maintain the integrity of the succession devolved to him, remains passive and neutral in his own quarrel. He even sanctions the usurpation of a considerable part of his territories, and legitimates, as far as he is able, the violence of the Imperial cabinet. How are we to account for such a line of conduct, in a Prince hitherto considered as neither pusillanimous, nor incapable of defending his rights? How are we to reconcile it to the ordinary maxims

maxims of political interest, or of private honor? I will endeavour, from the lights which I possess, to explain in some measure the secret motives of so extraordinary and mysterious a policy.

Charles Theodore, the reigning Elector Palatine, is no longer young, nor, as we must suppose, under the influence of any passions except such as are compatible with, if they do not contribute to, his felicity and repose. Endowed with judgment, and possessed of no mean abilities, he is nevertheless unambitious; and is more attached to his pleasures, than desirous of aggrandizing his house, or extending his dominions. In attention and application to public business he is not deficient. His leisure is principally divided between the gratifications of appetite, and the pursuits of literature, to both of which he alternately sacrifices. He no longer rides or hunts, having renounced for these ten or twelve years past, the diversion of the chace, on account of a dizziness to which he is subject: but in the conviviality

viviality of the table he indulges freely. As a Sovereign, compelled to the obſervance of certain ceremonious forms, he dines every day in public, about one o'clock: but, to compenſate for the ſacrifice, he ſups in private; and at theſe ſelect parties the Elector lays aſide all reſtraint. Ladies who are diſtinguiſhed by their attractions of perſon and of mind, contribute to animate the converſation, which is by no means confined within the limits of auſtere ſeverity. His female attachments have not, however, at any period of his life, been diſtinguiſhed by delicacy of ſentiment, or ſelection of choice. On the contrary, they have rather been marked by oppoſite characteriſtics. Few princes now living, none perhaps except the King of Pruſſia, have cultivated their minds more aſſiduouſly, or with greater ſucceſs. His reading is extenſive; and to the information derived from books, he adds the advantages of travel, as well as a perfect knowledge of mankind. He has viſited Italy, as a lover of the arts; and he reads the

the works of the poets and hiſtorians of that country, ancient and modern, in their original languages. In Engliſh, I am aſſured he is not leſs converſant. Though by perſuaſion a Catholic, he is in no reſpect a bigot; and if we try him by the ordinary ſtandard of princes, he certainly occupies a place much above mediocrity.

When young, for he is now fifty-four, he was married to his couſin, a princeſs of the ſame branch of the Palatine houſe from which he is himſelf deſcended. She is ſtill alive, but they have never had any iſſue. The Electreſs Palatine, Maria Elizabeth of Sulzbach, who was born in 1721, is near four years older than her huſband. Neither her face, nor her figure, can ever have had any pretenſions to beauty; but ſhe is a woman of parts and ſpirit. In her ſterility is to be diſcovered the leading cauſe of Charles Theodore's political conduct. It is in that defect that we muſt trace the principle of his apathy and indifference relative to the preſervation of his dominions.

Destitute of legitimate descendants, and without hope of having any by his present wife; succeeding to the late Elector of Bavaria, in consequence of the extinction of that branch of the Palatine family; and unattached to his presumptive successor, the Duke of Deux-Ponts; he feels no ambition to transmit entire the succession to a collateral and distant heir. All his affections and inclinations are converted into another channel. He has five natural children, two male and three female, for whom he expresses the warmest attachment. One of them, who is married to Frederic William, Prince of Issembourg and to whom he is particularly partial, is now here at Munich. The Imperial Court, well informed of the Elector's sentiments political and private, has profited with address of his partiality towards his illegitimate issue. Prince Kaunitz has found means to convey to him assurances, on the part of Maria Theresa and Joseph, that in return for his neutrality and acquiescence in their claims upon Bavaria, they will

will provide in a diſtinguiſhed manner for all his natural children. Nor have they neglected to awaken his jealouſy, and to excite his reſentment, at the oppoſition which he has experienced upon this point from the Duke of Deux-Ponts.

Influenced by theſe conſiderations, which operate forcibly in his boſom, Charles Theodore hitherto holds firm to his convention with the Houſe of Auſtria. Neither the murmurs of his new ſubjects, who feel for the humiliation of the Bavarian line and name, nor the remonſtrances of Pruſſia and Saxony, can induce him to take up arms in his own cauſe. He ſees with philoſophic indifference, or ſilent diſregard, the moſt beautiful portion of his dominions torn from him by foreign violence. It is however, matter of reaſonable doubt, how long he can perſiſt in ſo paſſive a ſyſtem. Thoſe perſons who have acceſs to him in his private hours, aſſert that he is viſibly uneaſy and diſturbed; that he wiſhes to drown reflection; and as the beſt means of effecting

 it,

it, that he has recourſe to the ſame expedient which Alexander uſed, when deſirous of avoiding the painful importunity of thought. I am aſſured likewiſe, that in his own family he experiences the moſt pointed oppoſition, not to ſay the ſevereſt reproaches. The Electreſs his wife, as a Princeſs of the Palatine family, feels for the wounded dignity of her huſband. The Ducheſs Dowager of Bavaria her ſiſter, ſprung from the ſame origin, participates in the Electreſs's emotions. She is a woman of ſuperior endowments of mind, the intimate friend and correſpondent of His Pruſſian Majeſty, with whom ſhe maintains a conſtant intercourſe. When theſe Princeſſes are alone with the Elector, they expreſs their ſentiments in language of the utmoſt aſperity, and endeavour to rouſe him from his inglorious inaction. Time will ſhew how far theſe efforts can ſurmount his affection for his natural children, added to his love of repoſe.

I was preſented to his Electoral Highneſs a few days ago. His manner is rather polite

lite than dignified; nor do the lines of his countenance, which are harſh, ſaturnine, and ſtrong, prepoſſeſs at firſt ſight in his favor. He has a large forehead, black eyebrows, his noſe hooked and prominent; his figure manly, but not graceful, of a middle ſize, inclining towards corpulency. In general he wears an uniform, and the inſignia of no leſs than three orders of knighthood. One is the "Golden Fleece," ſent him by the Court of Vienna on his acceſſion to the Bavarian dominions, as a mark of conciliation and reſpect, at the very moment when they were deſpoiling him of his territories.

The Court of Munich does not ſtrike me as brilliant, though the Palatine and Bavarian Nobility are in ſome degree ſeen united here under a common Sovereign. Nor is the Electoral Palace either a regular, or a beautiful ſtructure. One apartment, a bed-chamber, the furniture of which is ſaid to have coſt a hundred thouſand pounds ſterling, was fitted up by order of the late

Emperor, Charles the Seventh. After ſurveying the ſplendid chamber which he occupied when living, it was a curious tranſition to deſcend into the obſcure ſubterranean vault where he now repoſes, in the church of the Theatins. His remains are depoſited in a ſimple coffin, compoſed of block tin, and on it this inſcription:

"Carolus Septimus,
"Romanorum Imperator,
"Semper Auguſtus."

Cloſe by his ſide, unconſcious of the wars which at this moment deſolate Europe, to which he has given riſe, is laid the Elector his ſon, who died only a few months ago. Such a ſcene is calculated to awaken many reflections; but as they would be rather gloomy and philoſophical, than of a cheerful deſcription, I leave them to your own ſuggeſtion, and conclude by informing you that to-morrow we ſhall ſet out for Vienna.

## LETTER XXVI.

*General opinions entertained at Vienna, relative to the conduct of the campaign.—State of Vienna and of the Court—Arrival of the Emperor.*

VIENNA, *November* 28, 1778.

AFTER having viſited the Poliſh, Saxon, and Bavarian capitals, I arrived here from Munich three weeks ago. Our journey through Bavaria and Auſtria was rapid: but two impreſſions which it has left on my mind are never to be eraſed. The firſt was at Welz in Upper Auſtria; where Charles the Fifth, Duke of Lorrain, when expiring, dictated his memorable letter to the Emperor Leopold, whoſe ſiſter he had married. Expelled by Louis the Fourteenth from his native dominions, expatriated, and compelled to ſeek ſervice under a foreign Prince, he was on his road to Vienna, when a mortal diſeaſe attacked him at Welz. In this

ſituation, he addreſſed the following lines to Leopold. I cite them from memory. "Sire, "J'etois en chemin pour me rendre aux "pièds de votre Majeſtè Imperiale, quand "je me trouve arreté par un plus grand "maitre que lui. Je laiſſe en mourant une "ſœur que vous touche, des enfans à qui "je ne laiſſe que mon épée, et des ſujets "qui ſont dans l'oppreſſion." It ſeems impoſſible to exceed the laconic ſublimity of this parting addreſs, which is far more ſimple and affecting in my opinion than Adrian's lines to his ſoul, before his deceaſe. The view from the bridge acroſs the Danube at Lintz, was not leſs calculated to leave on my memory the deepeſt and moſt pleaſing recollections. The ſcenery is wild, and baffles deſcription; nor do I allow myſelf to engage in the attempt, which would inſenſibly lead me from the principal object of my attention, Vienna.

The Imperial Court, as well as the metropolis at large, ſeem to be plunged into a ſort of melancholy and gloomy repoſe, which

which has ſucceeded to the late campaign. Diſappointment and dejection however may be eaſily perceived, nor are they, indeed, attempted to be concealed. I ſee no public marks of exultation, and I hear no panegyrics pronounced on the Emperor's military atchievements. If the conduct of Frederic is ſeverely criticized at Dreſden, that of Joſeph is far more loudly reprobated at Vienna. I dined yeſterday at Prince Coloredo's, where a numerous company was aſſembled. On my right hand ſat an officer of diſtinction, who had ſerved in the Moravian army during the whole ſummer; and we freely diſcuſſed the operations of the two great leaders, as well as their reſpective claims to approbation and applauſe.

" Never," ſaid he, " ſince the acceſſion " of the reigning Empreſs, during eight- " and-thirty years, have the Auſtrians ex- " hibited ſo inglorious a ſpectacle to Eu- " rope, as in the preſent campaign. We " have indeed in former periods been more " unfortunate; we have been defeated and

" put-

"to the ſword: but we have never yet, "with ſuperior numbers, at the beginning "of the campaign, in the midſt of our own "territories, and poſſeſſing all the means "of offenſive war, ſubmitted to be ſhut up "and beſieged within our lines. At the "moſt diſaſtrous period of the late war in "1757, after the defeat which we ſuſtained "at Prague, Daun would not have adopted "ſo humiliating a plan, though he might "have been juſtified in purſuing it. If "ever offenſive operations were neceſſary "in order to inſpire the troops with ardor, "they were ſo in the preſent campaign. It "was indiſpenſable, after a peace of fifteen "years, to ſhew the Auſtrian ſoldier that he "was not inferior to the Pruſſian, either in "diſcipline, in courage, or in leaders. But "what has the Emperor done? He has im-"preſſed an indelible conviction on all his "officers and ſoldiers, that whatever may "be the juſtice of his cauſe, he feels his "inability to maintain it in the field. He "has tacitly admitted the Pruſſian ſuperi-

"ority.

"ority. From the inacceſſible heights of "Koniginratz, Joſeph beheld the fineſt "provinces of Bohemia plundered, with-"out daring to make an effort for their "defence. Frederic has carried off im-"menſe contributions, and deeply im-"printed the terror of his arms in every "village, and on every inhabitant. Was "any exertion made to impede his retreat "out of Bohemia, when loaded with plun-"der? None. He retired without our "ſcarcely daring to moleſt him, and he "will return far more formidable in the "enſuing ſpring.

"But, our misfortunes and our diſgrace "do not ſtop here. The pernicious pre-"ſence of the Emperor has diffuſed them "over every part of the military opera-"tions, and prevented our ſucceſs, where, "without his interference, it would have "been equally certain and brilliant. Though "the King of Pruſſia was able to effect his "retreat without confuſion to Schatzlar, in "ſight of the Emperor and Marſhal Lacy; "Prince Henry of Pruſſia could not have

"retired

" retired with equal impunity into Saxony, " under the eyes of Laudohn. That able " commander, who was encamped at Munchengratz; after effectually preventing " by the position which he had taken, the " junction of the two armies, only waited " for the favorable moment of action. He " knew the impediments to Prince Henry's " retreat into Saxony, the ruined condition " of his cavalry, the difficulty of dragging " his artillery through almost impassable " roads, and the impossibility of his making effectual resistance, if vigorously attacked. Laudohn had even formed all " his dispositions for the purpose, had " issued his final orders, and was about to " execute them with his characteristic rapidity on the following morning at daybreak. Our success must have been infallible. But, for our misfortune, his " Imperial Majesty arrived from Koniggratz, in an open carriage, alone, on the " evening before the destined attack. All " Laudohn's plans were instantly suspended " and reversed; we remained inactive; and

"Prince

" Prince Henry, like the King his brother, " closed the campaign triumphantly. It " is thus that we are sacrificed, counter- " acted, and dishonoured. How can it be " otherwise? The Empress, we are not ig- " norant, from the first instant has depre- " cated a rupture, and only wishes for " peace. The Emperor breathes war, but " knows not how to conduct it, though for " our misfortune, he aspires to superin- " tend all the operations in person. Prince " Kaunitz fluctuates between both; de- " sirous of repose, yet anxious to gratify " a Prince whose passion is ambition, and " who may soon become his sole master. " Such is the actual state of our affairs."

I confess myself not a little inclined to admit the justice of this picture, which is certainly true, though perhaps highly coloured. It is stamped in legible characters on every countenance here, and pervades every conversation. All the operations of war are however, for the present closed, or suspended by the season. Frederic, at sixty-seven, no longer braves the snows, nor

keeps

keeps the field, as he did twenty years ago, when contending for his crown and life. He is retired into Silesia, and has disposed of his troops in winter-quarters. A similar conduct is pursued by the Austrians. When I arrived here on the seventh of this month, I found all the great general officers already returned. Lacy, Laudohn, Prince Charles Lichtenstein, had quitted the army of Bohemia; as Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen had done that of Moravia. The Archduke Maximilian was scarcely recovered from a long and severe illness, with which he had been attacked in the camp at Koniginngratz. The Emperor alone, absent in Bohemia, was still occupied in issuing directions relative to the cantonment of the forces, and inspecting the frontier. As some compensation for his absence, the Great Duke and Duchess of Tuscany came here in September, on a visit to the Empress Queen; but their presence, whatever personal consolation it may afford her, is far from diffusing hitherto the slightest degree of gaiety over the Court or capital. They remain almost

con-

constantly secluded in the Imperial Palace, without mixing in any of the amusements of Vienna.

After being long and impatiently expected, the Emperor reached this city five days ago, at ten in the morning of the 23d, from Olmutz. He came incognito in his post-chaise, with scarcely any attendants. In order to enjoy the pleasure of surprizing the Empress, he did not even permit his arrival to be announced; and having purposely taken his way through the least frequented streets of Vienna, he got undiscovered to the palace. Quitting his carriage, he ran hastily up a private staircase which led to her apartment, and before she was prepared for it, he threw himself into her arms. Maria Theresa's emotions of joy at seeing her son again, were not less violent than had been her grief at his departure for Bohemia in April, and she was for some minutes overcome by their force. I saw the Emperor next day at court, there being a gala in honour of the Great Duchess of Tuscany's birth-day, where he was present.

fent. He looks fun-burnt and thin, as might be naturally expected, but otherwife in perfect health; and he affumed a gaiety of manners and deportment in the drawing-room, which appeared to fevere obfervers to border on affectation. No demonftrations of joy, public or private, have followed his arrival, and the winter feems to begin under very unfavourable aufpices for a future refidence at Vienna. Many of the great nobility, whofe eftates lie in the northern provinces of Bohemia, have fuffered extremely by the Pruffian and Saxon depredations. The army is difcontented; while the inferior people murmur at the increafe of taxes, and look forward with natural apprehenfion, to their probable augmentation. Almoft every one feems to dread the continuance of war, and to hope that winter may not merely interpofe a temporary ceffation of hoftilities, but produce overtures of peace. Time will fhew whether their expectations are likely to be gratified.

## LETTER XXVII.

*Concern of the Empreſs at the birth of a French Princeſs.—Activity of the Emperor's character.—State of the public mind at Vienna, at the cloſe of the year 1778.*

VIENNA, *December [illegible],* 1778.

MARIA THERESA in addition to the public ſources of uneaſineſs and anxiety ariſing out of the war, which agitate her mind, is at this moment entirely occupied with a domeſtic misfortune, if ſuch it may be juſtly eſteemed; for it can in fact only be termed a diſappointment. Yeſterday, a courier arrived from Verſailles, to announce that the Queen of France has brought into the world a daughter. After near nine years of ſterility, her pregnancy was an event which inſpired this court with the liveliſt joy. All the [illegible] of the Empreſs Queen, and of her miniſter Prince

Kaunitz, by blending the Auſtrian and Bourbon families, with a view to extinguiſh the long hereditary animoſities of the two Crowns, remain ſtill incomplete while there is not a Dauphin. The Queen of Naples, and the Archducheſs of Parma, who are married to two other princes of the Houſe of Bourbon, have both performed this eſſential ſervice to the ſtate, and have produced ſons. Maria Thereſa has omitted no ſpiritual exertions on her part, to enſure the like benediction on her youngeſt daughter. As the means which ſhe conceived to be moſt effectual, ſhe has wearied Heaven with prayers, and proſtrated herſelf before a variety of ſaints and altars, to obtain ſo great a boon. You will perhaps hardly believe that maſſes and ſupplications for the Queen's ſafe delivery, at which her Imperial Majeſty aſſiſted in perſon, have for ſeveral weeks paſt, been performed publicly to a "Vierge groſſe," in one of the churches of Vienna. The dreſs and figure of the ſtatue in queſtion, which is that of the Virgin,

gin, reprefent a pregnant woman. The Emprefs's vows have not, for this time, been fully heard; but as the impediments which prevented the Queen of France from having iffue, whatever they were, are now furmounted, her mother may ftill reafonably hope that time will accomplifh her moft fanguine wifhes.

This inaufpicious event, joined to the preffure of a war unqueftionably originating in her own, or rather in her fon's ambition, which threatens to involve the evening of her reign in great difquietude, have added force to the Emprefs's habitual devotion. She is gloomy, penfive, and frequently in tears. The capital already feels the influence of fuch a change, which clouds the chearfulnefs of fociety; and will, it is believed, fupprefs all public teftimonies of mirth or amufement. Maria Therefa has indicated her intention to prohibit the Ridottos and mafked balls cuftomary in the Carnival. No perfon ventures even to intercede with her in behalf of thefe pro-

ſcribed diverſions; and unleſs the Emperor ſhould do ſo with warmth, there is not any proſpect of their taking place during the preſent winter. His Imperial Majeſty, though far leſs affected than his mother, by the recent diſappointment from Paris, is nevertheleſs much ſecluded, and conſtantly occupied in his Cabinet. He comes ſeldom into company, and is rarely ſeen at Prince Kaunitz's, or at Prince Coloredo's Drawing Room, as he frequently uſed to be before the war. It is indeed true, that on the firſt day of the preſent month, he dined at Court in public, with the Knights of "the Golden Fleece," of which order he is the chief and ſovereign. But this is the only act of ſtate at which he has aſſiſted, or where he has appeared in perſon ſince his return from Bohemia.

His indefatigable vigilance and activity carry him notwithſtanding, to every place where he conceives that his exertions can be uſeful or ſalutary. He neither conſiders the renunciation of ſleep, nor any degree of perſonal

perſonal inconvenience, as impediments, when the occaſion appears to demand his interference. A few days ago, at ſeven in the evening, a fire broke out near the palace of Schonbrun, about a mile beyond the extremity of the ſuburbs on that ſide, without the lines which ſurround Vienna. As it raged violently for ſome time, apprehenſions were entertained that the Menagerie of Schonbrun might be endangered by the flames. The night was dark and cold: but no ſooner was the Emperor apprized of the circumſtance, than he inſtantly mounted his horſe, and gallopped to the ſpot. On his arrival he gave directions for extinguiſhing the flames, aſſiſted in getting engines for the purpoſe, and remained there till the conflagration ceaſed.

Theſe demonſtrations of his attention to preſerve the tranquillity, and to provide for the ſafety of the capital, cannot however diſſipate the univerſal gloom occaſioned by the war, augmented by the mode in which it has been hitherto conducted. The

tary ſuſpenſion of hoſtilities on both ſides, though pretty general, conduces little to tranquillize the public mind. Congreſſes are indeed mentioned as likely to take place in the courſe of the winter; but the original cauſe of quarrel remains entire, while the Auſtrians continue to occupy Lower Bavaria, and refuſe reſtitution of any part of the ſequeſtered territories. A more ſerious ſubject of alarm appears to be ariſing on the ſide of Ruſſia, Frederic having found means to intereſt the Empreſs in his quarrel, if not as an open auxiliary, yet as a friend. It is well known that ſhe has expreſſed through her Miniſter to this Court, Prince Gallitzin, the utmoſt diſapprobation of the conduct of the Cabinet of Vienna in the affair of the Palatine ſucceſſion. Her interpoſition, if ſincere and ſtrenuous, muſt be deeply felt and reſpected by both parties. It is certain that preparations of every kind are making here for an early campaign. So ſtrong was the alarm of a recommencement of hoſtilities, only a fortnight ſince, that

meaſures were taken to act in the field without delay. The departure of the Grand Duke and Ducheſs of Tuſcany for Florence, was ſettled for the firſt week in January; and that of the Emperor to join the army in Bohemia, for the ſecond of the ſame month: but the report is now contradicted. Every day may however, in the preſent critical ſituation of affairs, produce ſome great event, and you ſhall be informed of any occurrence that ariſes of moment.

## LETTER XXVIII.

*Aſpect of the Court.—Military Operations.—Capture of Habelſchwert.—Conduct of the Empreſs on that event.—Deſertions.—Diſcontent at Vienna.—Preparations for a ſecond Campaign.*

VIENNA, *January* 27, 1779.

WE remain ſtill in the ſame anxious ſituation, uncertain as to peace or war. The new year opened it is true, with the cuſtomary day of Gala, held on the firſt of January, at which their Imperial Majeſties, accompanied by the Archdukes and Ducheſſes, were all preſent. But it was long believed that the Empreſs would not admit of any public entertainments being exhibited during the Carnival; and ſhe actually perſiſted in her determination upon that point, to the laſt moment. The interpoſition and remonſtrances of her ſon the

the Emperor ſurmounted however, not without difficulty, her repugnance to theſe amuſements, which are at length allowed to take place in the uſual manner. The Emperor himſelf attended by the Great Duke and Ducheſs of Tuſcany, appeared at one of the maſked balls; but except on this ſingle occaſion, Vienna has diſplayed ſcarcely any marks of feſtivity, and it is perhaps at preſent, of all the capitals in Europe, the leaſt chearful.

The ſeverity of the winter has by no means altogether produced a ceſſation in the operations of war. Frederic, who is retired to Breſlaw, where he now reſides, does not, it is true, perſonally conduct theſe incurſions, as they may be termed; their object being principally plunder and contributions. His nephew, the Hereditary Prince of Brunſwic, ſupplies his place, and has made himſelf maſter of Troppau and Jagerndorf, the only two remaining diſtricts of Sileſia yet unannexed to the Pruſſian Monarchy. It is apprehended that he

will

will maintain himſelf there till the opening of the campaign. If however the Auſtrians have been driven in, or compelled to retreat on that ſide, they have taken ample vengeance in another quarter, and have obtained a very brilliant advantage over the enemy.

Colonel Palavicini arrived here a few days ſince, with intelligence of the ſurprize and capture of Habelſchwert. It is a fortified town of conſiderable ſtrength and importance, ſituate in the county of Glatz; which is a diſmembered portion of Bohemia, reconquered by Maria Thereſa during the war of ſeven years; but, ceded anew to his Pruſſian Majeſty at the peace of Hubertſbourg. The Prince of Heſſe Philipſtahl, who commanded in the place, together with his whole garriſon, are made priſoners of war. Count Kinſki and General Wurmſer, to whom the conduct and execution of the attempt was entruſted, have deſervedly gained great applauſe. Having rapidly aſſembled a body of troops, they marched

marched during the night, favoured by the darkneſs; approached the walls in ſilence ſoon after daybreak; and inſtantly placing their ſcaling ladders, as Laudohn did formerly at Glatz and at Schweidnitz, they mounted the ramparts before the enemy was aware of the attempt, or in any manner prepared for their attack. After a feeble defence, Habelſchwert fell into their hands. Frederic muſt be deeply ſenſible to ſo unexpected an affront, as well as ſo ſerious a diſaſter; nor is it doubted that he will treat the Prince of Heſſe, as he did the unfortunate General Finck, after the memorable affair of Maxen.

The capture of Habelſchwert opens one of the paſſages into Sileſia, and may be followed by important conſequences, if it is not ſpeedily regained. As it may be denominated the firſt ſucceſsful attempt to carry the war into the enemy's dominions ſince the commencement of hoſtilities, the intelligence is peculiarly grateful to the Emperor. It has occaſioned the warmeſt demon-

demonſtrations of joy throughout Vienna, and has diſſipated for an inſtant the gloom of the Imperial palace. Even Maria Thereſa herſelf, however averſe to the preſent conteſt, is not inſenſible to the event. When Palavicini, who arrived with the ſtandards taken from the enemy, was preſented to her; ſhe received the news with extraordinary ſatisfaction, and liſtened with the utmoſt complacency, while he related to her all the particulars of the ſtorm and ſurrender of Habelſchwert. Being informed that the inhabitants had ſuffered conſiderably by pillage, during the firſt fury of the troops, her heart was affected. Going to her bureau. ſhe opened it, and took from thence a bag containing five hundred ducats in gold; then putting it into Palavicini's hand, "I deſire," ſaid ſhe, "that this ſum may be diſtributed "in my name to the unfortunate ſufferers, "whoſe houſes or effects have been plun-"dered by my ſoldiery: it will be of ſome "little uſe and conſolation to them under

"their

" their misfortune." So ſingular an act of liberality and compaſſion towards the inhabitants of a Pruſſian town taken in war, has occaſioned much aſtoniſhment, and has even given riſe to a variety of opinions reſpecting its propriety, as well as its wiſdom and policy. There are not wanting perſons here who cenſure her conduct with ſeverity, attribute it to the ſcruples of a wounded mind conſcious of the injuſtice of the war in which ſhe is engaged, and who conſider ſuch munificence as ill beſtowed. Without pretending to analize the ſecret feelings of the Empreſs's breaſt, it ſeems nevertheleſs impoſſible not to admire the act, or not to do juſtice to the philanthropy and benevolence of Maria Thereſa; qualities which have uniformly marked her character at every period of her life. Palavicini has been raiſed from a Colonel, to the rank of Major General.

This fortunate event is not the only one which has taken place within the laſt few days;

days; another very confiderable advantage having been gained by a body of Auftrians over the enemy, in a fkirmifh near Zuckmantel in Silefia. A few more fuch actions would bereave the Pruffians in a great degree of that reputation, which conftitutes an important part of their military fuperiority, and would teach the Auftrian foldier to regard himfelf as their equal. Frederic has moreover fuffered immenfely by defertion, as always happens at the commencement of a war. I heard the Baron de Breteuil, the Ambaffador of France, affert only two days ago, that he had himfelf given paffes to more than thirteen thoufand French deferters from the Pruffia army, the greater part of whom entered Auftria from Bohemia, over the bridge acrofs the Danube at Lintz. The Emprefs has likewife fuftained no inconfiderable lofs from the fame caufe; but yet, far lefs than her adverfary, becaufe her armies are compofed principally either of her native fubjects, or at leaft of Germans.

Notwith-

Notwithſtanding ſo many exhilarating circumſtances, which ſeem to preſage a proſperous campaign, the Court continues to be gloomy and joyleſs. The Great Ducheſs of Tuſcany's health, which is very precarious, increaſes the dejection in the Imperial Palace: ſhe is at this time much indiſpoſed. Prince Kaunitz, who may be conſidered as a political barometer, appears thoughtful, and has loſt his uſual good humour. The general officers are known to be all diſcontented or diſguſted. They cannot be ignorant of the ſecret diviſions in the Cabinet, and are well aware how much every operation of war will be weakened or counteracted by the Archducheſs Chriſtina's influence over her mother. They do not leſs deprecate, I believe, the Emperor's preſence and interference in the field, which was ſo pernicious in Bohemia, three Months ago. Even Joſeph himſelf, inſtructed by experience, or apprehenſive of Ruſſian interference, is thought to be no longer averſe to pacific propoſitions.

propositions. It is imagined that overtures to that purpose will be made through the Court of Petersburgh, as Prince Repnin is at Breslau with his Prussian Majesty, occupied, we understand, in concerting the preliminaries.

The prospect of peace does not however induce the Austrian Government to intermit their preparations for meeting the approaching campaign. Very heavy taxes have been levied on the people, and proportionate exertions are making to raise a force, capable not only of facing Frederic in the field, but of giving him battle. The Emperor cannot intrench himself a second time in an inaccessible camp, and allow the Prussians to desolate his dominions, without totally breaking the spirit of his troops, which the late fortunate events at Habelschivert and Zuckmantel, have greatly elevated. Three hundred and fifty thousand men, it is asserted, will be under arms in Bohemia and Moravia, before May. So prodigious a strength, properly

 conducted,

conducted, might enable Maria Theresa and Joseph to carry the war into Saxony or Silesia, and almost to dictate terms at the gates of Breslau, or of Dresden. Frederic, it is certain, cannot, even including his allies, bring into the field more than about two-thirds of the Austrian force. But his name, his cause, and the energy, as well as decision of his councils, may perhaps more than counterbalance the superiority of numbers. The campaign is expected to open betimes, and whenever it begins, the shock must be terrible. We wait here with anxious solicitude for further information relative to peace.

# LETTER XXIX.

*State of ſociety at Vienna.—Female manners and education.—Diſpoſal of time.—Dreſs.—Style of beauty.—Severity of the Empreſs in reſtraining diſſipation.—Superſtition.—Men.—Defects of their education.—Literary prohibitions.—Ignorance of the upper ranks.—Opulence of the great Nobility.—Executions.—Police.—Spies.—Bigotry.—Belief in familiar ſpirits, and in the philoſopher's ſtone.—Laboratories.—Veneration for Paracelſus.—Belief in ſecrets to prolong life.—Theatrical amuſements.—Univerſality of the French language.—Climate of Vienna.*

VIENNA, *February* 2, 1779.

IT is time to turn our attention from military preparations and levies, to images of another kind; to the picture of manners, and the deſcription of private life. A reſidence of two winters in Vienna, added to a perſonal acquaintance with the far greater part of thoſe who compoſe its ſociety in the beſt ſenſe of the term; enable me to ſpeak with ſome information on the interior of this metropolis, its pleaſures, occupations, and inhabitants. Few European cities offer more

more reſources to a ſtranger, who does not place his felicity in abſolute diſſipation. He will not indeed find here the productions of art, or the monuments of antiquity, which are to be ſeen at Florence, or may be ſtudied at Rome. The circle of elegant pleaſures that Paris offers; or the more elevated range of mingled knowledge, buſineſs, and recreation afforded by London, are not, it is true, characteriſtic of Vienna. But the Auſtrian capital, however limited in its gratifications, may, nevertheleſs, moſt uſefully, as well as agreeably detain a foreigner; and I ſhall always, in the review of my paſt life, eſteem the time which I have ſpent here, among the beſt employed, as well as moſt pleaſing, which it has been my lot to paſs in any country of Europe.

It is not in Vienna, as with us, where a native of France or of Germany, however rich, highly born, or accompliſhed, may paſs not only one, but many winters, in vain endeavours to force his way into the private ſociety of the Great. He is not driven here, as he is in London, or in Paris, to frequent the theatres and public places of

 diverſion,

diverſion, by way of refuge from dulneſs. Here a ſort of patriarchal ſimplicity ſubſiſts, in the midſt of thoſe entertainments or exhibitions which wealth and luxury have introduced. The upper orders ſeem to conſtitute only one large family, of whom Maria Thereſa is the common parent. The rallying point of pleaſure and relaxation at Vienna is found in the higheſt circles, to which a foreigner is immediately carried. The aſſemblies of Prince Kaunitz, and of Prince Coloredo, are the firſt into which every ſtranger of condition is introduced after his arrival. It is unneceſſary to repeat, that the former is Prime Miniſter and Chancellor of Maria Thereſa, as Queen of Hungary and Bohemia; while Prince Coloredo is the Vice-Chancellor of Joſeph the Second, in his quality of Emperor of Germany. As the houſes of both, which may be ſaid to form a part of the Imperial palace, are open every evening for the reception of company, they conſtitute a principal ſource of amuſement at Vienna. It is, beſides, an attention expected from perſons who have been preſented to thoſe Miniſters,

nifters, that they fhould frequently be feen of an evening among the crowd in their drawing-rooms. There is not the fmalleft degree of conftraint impofed by the prefence of Prince Kaunitz, who is ufually engaged at billiards, in a corner of the apartment; and every one is at perfect liberty to amufe himfelf, either at play, or in converfation, as his inclinations may lead him. Nearly an equal freedom reigns at Prince Coloredo's, who, furrounded by his numerous fons, daughters, and their defcendants or connexions, unites to the utmoft fimplicity of manners, all the politenefs of a courtier and a gentleman. Every circumftance conduces to put a foreigner at his eafe, and infenfibly to diveft him of the aukwardnefs or embarraffment natural on finding himfelf in the midft of a fociety, with whofe habits and common topics of converfation he is neceffarily unacquainted.

It muft, neverthelefs, be admitted that the Auftrian manners are cold and referved on firft acquaintance. There is a certain indolent indifference and liftlefs tranquillity which characterize them, as widely removed

from our national ſhyneſs and taciturnity, as they are from the French frivolity, loquacity, and levity. Time, habit, and a quiet, rather than a noiſy civility, inſenſibly ſurmount this impediment to converſation. The Auſtrian ladies are by no means deficient in external accompliſhments, mental and perſonal: they are in general elegant, graceful, and pleaſing; but they rarely poſſeſs, like thoſe of France and England, a cultivated mind. The principal reading of a woman of quality, is unfortunately ſuch as tends to pervert and contract, rather than to enlarge, exalt, and improve her underſtanding. Holy legends, lives of ſaints and devotees, maſſes, and homilies, conſtitute her chief information. She knows little of Madame de Sevignè, and leſs of the productions of Racine, Moliere, or Fontenelle. If ſhe has peruſed the works of Cervantes, of Crebillon, and of Le Sage, ſhe has done much. But, on the other hand, with the writings of Saint Thereſa, and the reveries of Saint Catharine of Sienna, ſhe is perfectly familiar.

This want of female improvement is univerſal, and the neceſſary reſult of their confined education. Young women of condition

are all ſent to a convent, either at Prague, at Preſburg, or at Vienna. There they are taught to ſing hymns to the Virgin, and to tell their beads devoutly. Of hiſtory, poetry, and polite letters, they imbibe no tincture; and the ſpirit, if not the precepts of their religion, ſet bounds to any liberal enquiries, by the deteſtation that they inſpire for heretics, and heretical productions. Women of faſhion rarely ſtir out in a morning, except to hear maſs, or on particular occaſions. They uſually take a cup of coffee or chocolate when they riſe; and they either remain afterwards inviſible in their own apartments, in a ſtate of the greateſt undreſs, or devote the hours before dinner to the occupation of the toilet. Few of them admit viſits from men at that time of the day, which is ſacred to indolence, affected to devotion, or reſerved for private concerns of a domeſtic nature. A morning at Vienna is indeed ſhort, as the general hour of dining is ſtill half paſt two, and was formerly one o'clock; but it has gradually grown later for ſucceſſive years.

 Prince

Prince Kaunitz forms the only exception. The afternoons of courſe are long; and it is accounted polite to viſit, wherever it is known that a numerous company is met, about half paſt four, juſt as they are riſing from table.

The evening may properly be ſaid to begin about eight, or earlier. Beſides the houſes of Prince Kaunitz and Coloredo, there are others, in which, during winter, aſſemblies are held once a week, or more frequently. Among the chief, it would be unjuſt not to mention that of the French Ambaſſador; the only member of the "Corps diploma-"tique," whoſe eſtabliſhment enables him to entertain in a ſtyle of magnificence. Ices and lemonades are offered to the company, but there is never any ſupper except by particular invitation. Play is general: Ombre is among the reigning games; Loo, as well as Whiſt, very common: Taroc, Triſſette, Reverſé, and Tric Trac, much in vogue. Ladies who do not ſit down to cards, frequently have on their lap a little box of old Lac, and employ themſelves in

untwiſting

untwiſting gold thread, which by no means prevents converſation, as it only occupies the fingers. The reſerve of the Auſtrian women, ſo unpleaſant on firſt acquaintance, imperceptibly wears off, and gives place to their natural character. Their converſation, if not improving, is rarely deficient in ſpirit, vivacity, and animation. But a learned woman, ſo common with us, is a thing totally unknown at Vienna. I ought in juſtice likewiſe to ſay, that there are ſome pleaſing and ſhining exceptions to the imputation of ignorance. No capital in Europe can produce perſons more diſtinguiſhed by natural and acquired endowments, or of minds more liberal and enlarged, than the Counteſs Thun, and the Counteſs de Pergen: the houſes of both are the rendezvous of every perſon who pretends to refinement, and form the beſt reſource for the Engliſh during their ſtay in this capital.

The women dreſs well, with great taſte, and greater magnificence. I never ſaw in any Court ſuch a profuſion of diamonds, unleſs,

unleſs, perhaps, at Liſbon; and they diſpoſe their jewels with no little elegance. During the Carnival they endeavour to make amends for the privations impoſed by Lent, which extend not only to the table, but even to the toilet. They have, however, the abſurdity common in every kingdom in Europe, except England, of dreſſing girls at ſeven and eight years old, like women of ſixteen or eighteen, with powder, a high head, a Chignon, and a hoop; which is in fact the ſecret of rendering them old before they are young. Vienna abounds with beautiful women; but they are not all natives of Auſtria, or even of Germany. Bohemia, Hungary, Italy, and Poland, of which laſt country a conſiderable part is now become ſubject to Maria Thereſa, conſpire to adorn the Imperial capital with their reſpective tribute of beauty. Every circle of the German Empire may claim its ſhare in compoſing the ſociety of this its common metropolis, as all the cities of Greece contributed towards the Venus of Apelles. The national, or provincial

vincial caſt of character is, however, uſually preſerved, and eaſy to be diſtinguiſhed. The women of condition are noble in their deportment, and have a natural air of dignity. I think that in general their perſons are on a larger ſcale than with us, and that there are more fine forms, than pretty figures: their hair and teeth are commonly good, particularly the latter, to which the dryneſs of the air and climate contribute. If there be room for criticiſm, it is about the neck. Nature ſeems to have been laviſh of that attribute of beauty, only in Italy and in Greece; while in other European countries ſhe diſpenſes it with a more ſparing hand: there are in Vienna itſelf many charming exceptions to the remark.

Rouge is univerſally worn by married and unmarried women of faſhion; but they uſe it in general with moderation, as well as taſte: girls of fifteen wear it as much as perſons of thirty. The Archducheſſes alone are never rouged, the Empreſs not permitting them to be ſo on any occaſion whatever. After the death of the late Emperor

Emperor Francis in 1765, rouge was abſolutely and univerſally forbidden by Maria Thereſa, on pain of her diſpleaſure; nor did any one dare to uſe it, even in private companies, on the moſt ſelect parties. Nothing can more ſtrongly prove the ſpecies of maternal power which the Empreſs exerciſes over her people, which ſometimes aſſumes a religious, at other times a political, or moral character. They obey with a ſort of filial ſubmiſſion, in which reſpect and attachment are blended; though they murmur and complain at the ſame moment. It muſt be confeſſed, that the authority is very unlimited, which can enforce ſuch a prohibition throughout a whole capital, during a conſiderable length of time. Peter the Great, deſpotic as he was, found the obſtacles inſuperable in many inſtances, when he attempted to regulate dreſs and manners among his ſubjects. Rouge revived gradually and imperceptibly, as the Empreſs's grief wore off, and her conſequent repugnance to the demonſtrations of joy or feſtivity.

If it were poſſible by ſeverity, as well as example,

example, to baniſh and eradicate from any city, that intercourſe between the ſexes which we commonly denominate gallantry, it would have been totally extinguiſhed at Vienna. The Empreſs, rigidly virtuous in her own conduct, faithful to the marriage bed, and never ſuſpected of female weakneſs, makes very little allowance for the indiſcretions of others. She cruſhes every degree of libertiniſm beneath the immediate weight of her diſpleaſure. A woman of condition, if known to be frail, unleſs her frailty be confined to one lover, and managed with the utmoſt attention to privacy and decorum, is certain to receive an order to quit Vienna: perhaps ſhe is obliged to languiſh out life in ſome obſcure provincial town of Hungary, Auſtria, or other parts of her Imperial Majeſty's dominions. Such exerciſes of ſupreme authority, however deſpotic, and in ſome inſtances perhaps ſevere, capricious, or miſtaken, yet operate moſt forcibly to maintain the purity of morals in the capital. It is hardly poſſible to conceive how minute and circumſtantial a detail her inquiries

ries embrace, relative to the private conduct of her ſubjects of both ſexes: their actions, amuſements, and pleaſures, even the moſt concealed, are conſtantly reported to her. She employs emiſſaries or ſpies, who omit nothing for her information. I could relate from my own perſonal knowledge, ſome curious and entertaining inſtances of her inſpection into the conduct of the Ladies of her Court; but the ſubject is too delicate for particular details. An illiberal ſuperſtition, rather than a rational diſapproval of gallantry. on account of the private and political ills which it produces, frequently actuates her in this rigorous proſcription.

In no European capital are ſo much decency, caution. and reſpect for appearances maintained, in all connexions of pleaſure or attachment, as at Vienna. Theſe attentions are indiſpenſable, in order to avoid attracting the Imperial notice, always followed by reprehenſion or puniſhment. Gallantries here are covered with a myſterious veil, and aſſume the exterior of friendſhip. Unlike the fickle and libertine amours of Warſaw, or

of

of Peterfburgh, they generally laft for a quarter of a century, and are rarely broken off on either fide. Slow in forming, they are ftill more flow in diffolving. I am inclined to believe, that befides the reftraints alluded to, neither the climate nor the air of Auftria are favourable to violent paffions of any kind. There is fomething phlegmatic in the conftitution of the inhabitants, phyfical and intellectual, which is adverfe to ftrong emotions. The prefence of the Emprefs, who is always refident in, or near her Capital; and the terror infpired by her vigilance, as well as her refentment, operate in repreffing all exceffes. Superftition, confeffors, and penances, add weight to temporal motives. But the principle of frailty neverthelefs exifts; even Vienna has its Meffalinas, though certainly in fmaller number, and marked with fainter colours than elfewhere.

The fuperftition of an Auftrian woman, however characteriftic, habitual, and exceffive, is by no means inconfiftent or incompatible with gallantry: fhe fins, prays, confeffes, and begins anew; but fhe never

omits

omits her maſſes, not even for her lover. Few Ladies touch meat either on the Friday or Saturday of every week, or during the whole period of Lent; and they confeſs frequently; if not from principle, yet from habit or from fear. The marriage ring is ſeldom worn or kept, as its loſs would be ominous in their eſtimation, and preſage misfortune. In order to avoid ſo great a calamity, they are generally ſent to a celebrated chapel of the Virgin, at Maria Zell in Styria; a ſhrine where I am aſſured there are more gold rings, than the Carthaginian General found on the field of Cannæ Very little of the exterior of devotion is nevertheleſs viſible among women of condition: it interrupts no pleaſures of ſociety or converſation; it neither mixes with their diſcourſe, nor tinges their manners: they reſerve it for the altar, or the confeſſor. I ought likewiſe to add, that there are not a few who entertain much more liberal and expanded ideas of the Deity and of Religion, than the Catholic Faith uſually inſpires, particularly at Vienna.

After

After confidering the fofter fex, in fpeaking of the men, it is juft to make a leading diftinction. The Auftrian youth of rank or condition are in general infupportable. Diftinguifhed only by pride, ignorance, and illiberality; regarding themfelves as fuperior to every other European nation, becaufe their fovereign is titular head of the German Empire; altogether deftitute of improvement, commonly haughty and affuming; they want equally the inclination and the requifites to be agreeable in fociety. It is true, that like us, they commonly travel; that is from Vienna to Paris, through Italy, and home. They imitate the French manners; but poffefs neither the urbanity, the vivacity, nor the elegant levity of France. Though coxcombs, they are not amufing ones, and in cultivation of mind they are totally deficient. The univerfities and feminaries of inftruction, throughout the Auftrian dominions, are fcarcely more calculated to form, or to enlarge the underftanding, than the nunneries where the other fex are educated. An ecclefiaftic is ufually felected for the purpofe,

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whofe cares are principally limited to the morals of his pupils. Temperate in their appetites and pleafures, the youth of Vienna appear to me by no means to merit the imputation affixed on the Germans, of a fondnefs for wine.

It is among men of riper years, in every department civil or military, that are found polifhed manners, urbanity, and attention to ftrangers. In folid endowments of underftanding, in local information, and in all the branches of official knowledge which qualify for filling offices of ftate or truft with honour and ability; they may vie with the nobility of any country in Europe. But I am inclined to believe, that fewer perfons of extenfive reading and information are found among them, proportion obferved, than in any of the German Courts. To the injudicious bigotry of the Emprefs, may chiefly be attributed the deficiency. It is hardly credible how many books and productions of every fpecies, and in every language, are profcribed by her. Not only Voltaire and Rouffeau are included in the lift, from the fuppofed

ſuppoſed immoral tendency, or licentious nature of their writings; but many authors whom we conſider as unexceptionable or harmleſs, experience a ſimilar treatment. A ſentence reflecting on the Catholic religion; a doubt thrown upon the ſanctity of ſome hermit or monk of the middle ages; any compoſition in which the pleaſures of love are warmly depictured; for I by no means ſpeak of thoſe licentious writings which it is the duty of every government to ſuppreſs;—in a word, any work where ſuperſtition is attacked or cenſured, however ſlightly, attracts immediate notice, and is inſtantly prohibited under ſevere penalties.

The far greater number of thoſe books which conſtitute the libraries of perſons diſtinguiſhed for taſte and refinement, not merely in France or England, but even in Rome or Florence, are rigorouſly condemned, and their entry into Vienna is attended with no leſs difficulty than danger. It is indeed true, that notwithſtanding every prohibition, knowledge inſenſibly pierces, and gradually diffuſes itſelf over the Auſtrian dominions.

But its progreſs is neceſſarily proportioned to the impediments thrown in its way. On application to the literary inquiſitors or cenſors, who regulate this branch of internal police, almoſt any work may likewiſe be procured, though not without trouble, expence, and delay. Leipſic, Paris, or the Hague, to one or other of which places recourſe muſt uſually be had, are diſtant. The indolence natural to the human mind, frequently prevents ſuch an exertion, and extinguiſhes the feeble ſpark of deſire to receive entertainment or improvement. The Auſtrian nobility of both ſexes, a few excepted, ſeem indeed never to read; and appear equally deſtitute of an acquaintance with the polite, as they are with the abſtruſe, branches of ſtudy or literature.

The Hungarians of diſtinction are commonly maſters of Latin, becauſe among them it is ſtill a living language, as all the proceedings of the Courts of Judicature, and even the public acts of Government, are kept in the language of antient Rome. But law and juriſprudence tend very little to

 regulate

regulate their taſte, or to introduce them to a familiarity with the great writers of antiquity. It is not on the banks of the Danube, under Princes of the Houſe of Auſtria, that ſuch works are juſtly valued or appreciated. Horace, Salluſt, Virgil, and Tacitus, have here few readers, and fewer admirers. The hereditary ſuperſtition of Leopold and the Ferdinands, which ſurvives in the preſent Empreſs, precludes their entrance and reception. It is probable that the death of Maria Thereſa, and the acceſſion of Joſeph the Second to the Hungarian and Bohemian Crowns, will produce a vaſt revolution in the human mind. His ſentiments on religious ſubjects, though by no means clearly developed, are known to be more liberal; and they will, it is ſuppoſed, operate to throw down the political and moral barriers which for ages have prevented the diffuſion of improvement among the various claſſes of people.

Many of the great nobility here are extremely opulent, and maintain a ſplendor in their eſtabliſhments ſuited to their rank.

 They

They have usually a palace in Vienna, and another in the suburbs, where they alternately reside, according to the season of the year. A piece of magnificence, peculiar, as I believe, to the Imperial Court, is that all the Ministers employed in the principal offices or charges, are lodged at the expence of the Government, in houses or rather suits of apartments belonging to the Empress. Those of Prince Kaunitz are very superb. The range of rooms occupied by Prince Coloredo, as well as those of Count Rosemberg the "Grand Chambellan," constitute part of the vast edifice of the Imperial palace. If, however, they are thus provided with lodgings at the cost of the Crown, on the other hand, it must be owned, that the appointments and salaries of the great officers of state in every department, are, according to our ideas and modes of estimation, not merely narrow, but totally inadequate to sustaining the dignity of their public situations. The Master of the Horse has only four thousand florins a year, which make scarcely four hundred pounds sterling; and the

the "Grand Chambellan" receives no more than twelve hundred florins. All the inferior "Chambellans," who amount to near fifteen hundred, have only the privilege of wearing at their pocket a gold key, the ſymbol of their function. Every other place in the gift of the Crown, bears nearly the ſame proportion.

The family of Lichtenſtein may be eſteemed one of the wealthieſt in Vienna. Prince Francis, who is the head of that houſe poſſeſſes, I am aſſured, an annual income o at leaſt ſeventy thouſand pounds ſterling. It is nevertheleſs thought that prince Eſterhazi, with a receipt of only fifty thouſand pounds a-year, is in fact a richer man. The reaſon is that the Lichtenſtein eſtates lie principally in Bohemia, Moravia, and Auſtrian Sileſia, where the taxes are very heavy and oppreſſive; whereas the lands of Prince Eſterhazi are ſituated almoſt excluſively in Hungary, where the power of the Crown in levying pecuniary ſupplies, is confined by charters, privileges, and compacts, which the Hungarians, though eminently loyal, defend

againſt all encroachment. When at his palace of Eſterhazi, about thirty miles from Vienna, where he reſides during a great part of the year, the Prince maintains an eſtabliſhment approaching in every reſpect to royal; and he is, I believe, the only ſubject in Europe, who keeps in pay a regular company of guards. During the time that he paſſes at Vienna, he lives with far more privacy. Except Prince Kaunitz and Prince Coloredo, there is indeed no perſon here ſits down regularly every day to ſixteen or eighteen covers.

If London or Paris offer more variety of intellectual pleaſures and enjoyments, Vienna at leaſt abounds in every delicacy for the gratification of the palate, and the indulgence of appetite. Senſuality itſelf muſt be ſatisfied with the tables of the nobility, which are ſerved with great profuſion; Hungary, Moravia, and above all Bohemia, ſupplying every kind of luxury for the epicure. The Bohemian partridges and pheaſants are admitted to be infinitely ſuperior in flavour to thoſe of France or Italy. I dare not relate

relate what I have heard of the quantities of game, large and ſmall, killed, or rather ſlaughtered, in ſome of the Bohemian ſhooting parties. Many hundred head of deer, hares, boar, and all kinds of wild fowl, are maſſacred by theſe relentleſs ſportſmen; if ſuch they can with propriety be eſteemed, who eſtimate the diverſion only by the multitudes which they deſtroy, and by the facility of the chace. The Danube, as well as the lakes of Hungary, furniſh a variety of fiſh; and oyſters are even brought from the Adriatic, either from Trieſt, Fiume, or Venice, as are many kinds of ſea fiſh. Piedmont contributes the largeſt and the fineſt truffles that I ever taſted, which preſerve all the delicacy of their original flavour, though tranſported acroſs the Alps. Prince Kaunitz is regularly ſupplied with them from Turin. In no article do the Auſtrians diſplay more magnificence or variety than in their wines; and in many houſes, as Lady Wortley Montagu remarked ſixty years ago, a printed liſt of them is put under every plate. I have now by me

that

that of Prince Schwartzemberg, as well as that of Cardinal Migazzi, Archbiſhop of Vienna, and I ſhall copy the former, as a ſpecimen:

"Vin d'Abſynthe.
"Vin d'Autriche.
"Vin de Razerſdorf.
"Vin de Rhin.
"Vin de Moſelle.
"Vin de Nuitz.
"Vin de Champagne.
"Vin de Malaga.
"Vin de Bacaret.
"Vin d'Alicante.
"Vin de Balmſec.
"Vin de Cériſes.
"Vin de Tokay."

In this liſt, which includes ſome of the fineſt wines of Auſtria, Hungary, Germany, France, and Spain, an Engliſhman will however probably remark that neither Port, Claret, nor Madeira are to be found.

Notwithſtanding the number and delicacy of their wines, which might naturally tempt to an indulgence, the Auſtrians, as I have

I have already obſerved, are very temperate and moderate in the uſe of them. I never ſaw a ſingle inſtance of a young man of faſhion intoxicated, during the whole time that I paſſed at Vienna. If they commit exceſſes, they certainly are not thoſe of wine. This remark, however, applies only to the upper claſſes; the people, like the Germans in general, are more addicted to the uſe and abuſe of ſtrong liquors.

Crimes as well as puniſhments are rare, owing to the vigilance and ſeverity of the police. A murder is ſcarcely ever committed, and robberies are ſo uncommon, that at almoſt every hour of the day or night, a ſtranger may walk the ſtreets, or travel the public roads in ſafety. Of courſe, executions happen very ſeldom; but when they take place, they are conducted with admirable propriety, and in a way calculated to produce the ſtrongeſt effect on the beholder. I had the curioſity, for the firſt time in my life, to be preſent at an execution, only a few days ago; which, from the circumſtances that attended it, well merits a par-

a particular defcription. Many thoufand fpectators of all conditions were affembled to witnefs it; and never was any public ceremony performed with fo much folemnity and awful decorum. Four men, convicted of robbery, aggravated by circumftances of cruelty and inhumanity, were fentenced to die; not by the halter, as with us, but by the fword of the executioner. They fuffered on the Efplanade, without one of the gates of Vienna, upon a circular fpace or piece of ground walled in, through which a flight of fteps conducted to the platform, or fummit, which was raifed twelve or fourteen feet above the level of the Efplanade. In order to command a better view of it, I got into a cart placed fo near, that I could diftinguifh even the countenances and features of the criminals.

The firft of the four malefactors having been feated in a chair that was fcrewed down into the ground, his arms and body were next tied with cords, in order to prevent him from moving, and his neck was laid bare quite to the fhoulders. A bandage being drawn acrofs his eyes, four Auguftine monks,

monks, holding a crucifix, approached, and after prayer confessed him. The executioner's assistant then collecting his hair, pulled up his head, to the utmost extent of the neck; with a view to afford a fairer mark. Meanwhile the executioner himself, who was a very respectable man both as to figure and dress, arrived at the spot in a hackney coach. When all the requisite preparations were made, he threw off his cloak, and standing in his white waistcoat, he first displayed in the scabbard, and then unsheathed the instrument of punishment. It was a straight, two-edged sword, of an equal breadth, quite to the point, prodigiously heavy, broad, and sharp as a razor. Coming in flank of the criminal, who was blindfolded, and consequently ignorant of the precise moment of his approach; raising the sword with both hands, he took off the head at a single stroke, with a dexterity and celerity exceeding imagination. The assistant held it up streaming with blood, and then laid it down on the ground; while the decapitated trunk was allowed to remain for some seconds sitting

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ting in the chair, the blood ſpouting up at firſt to the height of three or four feet in the air. Two men then untied the corpſe, and taking it by the legs and ſhoulders, bore it to a little diſtance. The head was carried with it, placed beſide it, and both were covered with a large mat, which completely concealed the whole apparatus from ſight.

Previous to the act of beheading the ſecond culprit, the chair was wiped clean from the blood with which it had been ſtained; the ropes were waſhed, and ſand was ſcattered over the place; ſo that when he was brought up in his turn to ſuffer, no trace of the preceding execution was viſible. About half an hour elapſed between their reſpective deaths; the laſt three being beheaded with the ſame dexterity as the firſt, and with ſimilar circumſtances. The velocity with which the ſword paſſed through the neck, and diſſevered the head, was ſuch, that the blade ſcarcely appeared bloody. After inflicting each ſtroke, the executioner took out a white handkerchief, and carefully wiped away the globules of blood

blood which ſtood upon the ſword; then ſheathed, and laid it down at ſome paces from the chair, concealed by a cloak. The whole ceremony being ended, he advanced forward, nearly to the edge of the platform or ſcaffold, and holding up the inſtrument of juſtice, immediately after he had taken off the head of the laſt criminal, he addreſſed himſelf to the aſſembled multitude, demanding whether he had well performed his duty. They ſignified their approbation, and he then withdrew, in the ſame hackney coach which had conveyed him thither; while the people, before they diſperſed, joined with the monks in prayer for the ſouls of the departed. The four trunks and heads were expoſed during ſome hours on wheels, to the view of every one, and were afterwards interred.

I retired from this ſcene deeply impreſſed with ſo unuſual, as well as ſolemn a ſight, which excites, however, no ſenſation of horror, and is attended with nothing cruel or repugnant to humanity. On the contrary, human ingenuity and mercy could

not

not perhaps devise a mode of taking away life, at once so lenient and so instantaneous. In fact it is the work of one second only, and cannot possibly be physically felt by the person put to death. The mind, and not the body, feels the stroke, whereas the halter, as we know, does not always deprive of sentiment, or extinguish being for many minutes. Decapitation likewise makes a far more awful and profound impression on the surrounding multitude, who are deeply affected by the sight of the headless trunk, and view every part of the ceremony with other sensations than those of an English mob, assembled to see men carried in a cart to be hanged at Tyburn. Here it excites all those beneficial emotions which check the progress of crime, and retain society within proper limits.

The rapidity and precision with which the act of decapitation itself is performed, constitutes not the least wonderful part of it, and may be compared, in its velocity, to the effect of lightning. No axe could inflict so sure a stroke, however well directed by the most

most ſkilful hands, aided by the firmeſt nerves. It is indeed rare that we read of an executioner thus taking off a head at one blow. The Duke of Monmouth, who ſuffered under James the Second, was hacked to pieces by a terrified, or an unſkilful practitioner; and numerous inſtances of a ſimilar nature occur in our ſanguinary annals, under the Tudors and the Stuarts. I have been aſſured by more than one perſon, here, that the head frequently retains, for three or four minutes, a ſtrong and viſible principle of life, after its inſtantaneous ſeparation from the body; that the tongue and lips will even open and move. We are told that Marſhal Biron's head made a bound on the ſcaffold; a fact aſſerted by cotemporary and grave hiſtorians, whoſe authority it is difficult to reject. I will not venture to ſay any thing poſitive on this point, from my own perſonal obſervation; but I apprehend that both the head and trunk are capable of ſtrong convulſive ſpaſms or movements, after their being diſſevered from each other; particularly where the perſon

beheaded is at the time in high bodily health and vigor. The barbarous and absurd custom, common formerly at Vienna, Prague, and all over the German Empire, of catching a glass-full of the criminal's blood at the instant of his being beheaded, which was swallowed warm by persons affected with epileptic disorders, as a certain remedy; is now prohibited, or rather fallen into total contempt and disuse. Reason, aided by the progress of philosophy, has extinguished so abominable, as well as irrational a practice.

It is not merely over the public safety, and the security of the Austrian capital, that the police undertakes to preside. The morals, no less than the conduct of all her subjects, form an object of the Empress's constant and unremitting attention. It approaches on many points to rigor, and may perhaps be justly thought unbecoming her dignity, as well as ineffectual to any salutary purpose. Women who are accused or convicted of devoting themselves, however secretly, to the pleasures of the public, are

instantly

instantly taken up by her orders, and confined. Many are annually transported down the Danube, into the Banhat of Temeswaer; a marshy and unwholesome province, on the frontier of the Turkish dominions. It is said that the city of Temeswaer is half peopled with ladies of easy virtue and procuresses. I heard the Emperor give a most ludicrous description of one of the latter sort, very celebrated in her profession, whom he had the curiosity to visit in Sclavonia, to which remote country she had been banished by Maria Theresa, for her misdemeanors in Vienna.

Spies form a numerous, expensive, and very obnoxious branch of the state police. No place is free from their intrusion, or exempt from their enquiries. At the theatre, at the Ridottos, and at all public entertainments, there are some of them posted; not merely to protect the persons or the property of the audience, but to prevent likewise the smallest appearance of immodesty or licentiousness. These commissaries report to the Empress every fact worthy her notice, and many which are by no means of a nature to

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deferve her attention or interference. Such precautions neverthelefs would certainly be very laudable, if they were directed by a rational defire of reftraining debauchery, and moderating its pernicious confequences. But it is the progrefs of age and fuperftition, which has gradually rendered her auftere; and fhe is actuated rather by the narrow bigotry of an abbefs, than by the enlarged and enlightened principles of a fovereign. Yet even her errors are refpectable, fince they originate in virtue, and her feverity unqueftionably tends to reftrain exceffes of every nature.

The Auftrians in general are much lefs free from prejudices, and more attached to fuperftitious forms or obfervances, not only than the French or Englifh, but even than the natives of Germany or Italy. Their habitual bigotry is marked in almoft every act of ordinary life, or of common intercourfe and converfation. They reckon time, for inftance, not as we do, from a certain day of one month to a certain day of another: inftead of faying, from the 19th of March to the 21ft of June, they count from St. Jofeph to St.

St. John: and in order to comprehend their meaning, it is neceſſary to become acquainted with their Saints, who occupy almoſt every day in the calendar. As a proof of the aſcendant which ſuperſtition had, and ſtill has over the inferior claſſes, it will ſuffice to mention a well-known fact. The Saints' days were become ſo numerous, as to affect materially the tranſactions of commerce, and even to impede the ordinary buſineſs of the capital. All the ſhops being ſhut on thoſe feſtivals, the tradeſman or the mechanic paſſed the whole of them in idleneſs, recreation, debauchery, or devotion.

An evil of ſuch magnitude, which while it impoveriſhed the people, was productive of other pernicious conſequences to the State, loudly demanded redreſs. The Empreſs applied, therefore, to the late Pope, Ganganelli, for a diſpenſation from the obſervance of many of theſe holidays. He readily granted her requeſt; a conſiderable number were eraſed; all further obſervance of them was forbidden, and the people were commanded, on pain of puniſhment, to open

 their

their ſhops, as well as to purſue their reſpective occupations or trades. They did not venture openly to reſiſt a mandate of the Government, ſanctioned by a papal decree: but conceiving it to be no leſs impious, than it was contrary to the practice of their anceſtors, they contrived to elude and to render it fruitleſs, by refuſing to ſell any article, or by demanding an exorbitant price for it, upon the days when they were compelled to open their ſhops. It is only ſix years ago ſince the edict took place. Time has however inſenſibly mollified their intractability, and rendered them more docile: but it will require a long period, to eradicate prejudices which have been imbibed and cheriſhed for ſucceſſive centuries.

Natural philoſophy and ſcience have ſcarcely made greater progreſs in Vienna, than found reaſon and real religion. The doctrine of familiar ſpirits, inconceivable as ſuch weakneſs may appear, has its votaries and believers, even among perſons of the higheſt rank. It is not therefore to be wondered at that men are found, who, profiting of

the weakneſs and credulity common to human nature, profeſs to poſſeſs the ſecret of invoking, ſummoning, and commanding theſe inviſible agents. Princes, Miniſters, and General Officers of diſtinguiſhed reputation, whom it would be eaſy for me to name, are not aſhamed to liſten to their pretended diſcoveries, to be initiated into their myſteries, and to be preſent at their nocturnal meetings for the purpoſe of evoking or raiſing apparitions. Schrepfer would have found as many adherents, and made as many proſelytes here, as he did at Dreſden. Even the Count de Gabalis himſelf might here have promulgated his doctrines, without any apprehenſion from the ſcepticiſm, or the incredulity of his audience.

A fact not leſs incredible, is the eagerneſs and anxiety with which the philoſopher's ſtone is at this very time ſought after here. I ſhould not venture to aſſert, if I did not know from indiſputable authority, that at leaſt three thouſand perſons are at this time occupied in the reſearch, within the city and ſuburbs of Vienna. The Auſtrian Govern-

ment gives the example to the ſubject, and holds out every neceſſary encouragement to ſuch as chuſe to engage in the attempt. In order to diſcourage individuals, at the ſame time, from endeavouring to attain ſo ineſtimable a ſecret as the art of tranſmuting metals, it is forbidden to carry on chymical proceſſes or operations in private houſes. Any perſon detected in ſuch an occupation, may be ſeized by the officers of police, and all his apparatus confiſcated. But, if he ſhould be diſpoſed to engage in the undertaking, the Government will not only facilitate it; they will even furniſh him with the means. Profeſſor Jaquin is empowered by the Empreſs to receive propoſals from ſuch as are inclined to enter on the attempt to make gold; in other words, to find the philoſopher's ſtone. They are immediately provided by him with a room, charcoal, utenſils, crucibles, and every requiſite, at her Majeſty's expence.

The late Emperor Francis, like his predeceſſor in the Imperial dignity, Rodolph the Second, expended great ſums in this chimerical

chimerical ſearch. A perſon of the higheſt rank here, himſelf an adept, aſſured me that not very many years ago, a man arrived at Vienna, who profeſſed to be in poſſeſſion of the ſecret of producing gold. Having made an offer of his ſervices to Francis, he accepted them; but with a view of concealing the tranſaction from the public eye, the Emperor ſent him into Hungary, where he had purchaſed a houſe and an eſtate, named Hollitſch. Two military officers, choſen for their ſuppoſed fidelity, accompanied the projector, with orders very narrowly to watch, and to report upon his conduct. Every thing neceſſary for carrying on ſo important a work was liberally provided, and Francis promiſed him an ample recompence, if he accompliſhed his promiſes. The man actually ſent ſome gold to the Emperor, atteſted to be of his own production or fabrication, but it was only in ſmall quantity. After ſome time he ſuddenly diſappeared, and the two officers abſconded with him. The projector, who has eluded all enquiry, never was heard of ſince. But the officers,

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it is asserted, have been seen some time ago, one at Malta, the other at Hamburgh. Francis, instructed, however, by experience, employed no more alchymists to make gold.

Numbers of the first persons in Vienna have laboratories fitted up in their own houses, where they are daily and constantly occupied in the same singular, as well as unprofitable research. Far from being undeceived, or disgusted by ill success, they persevere, and expend no little sums of money in the endeavour. I have been many times in the laboratory of a great adept here, and have seen him employed in the process itself. The room conveyed to me the precise idea of a Necromancer's study, as described in romances; the floor strewed with crucibles, vials, and all the apparatus of alchymy. My attention was particularly attracted by seven lamps, burning under as many large glass bottles or receivers, each filled with a certain powder or dark matter: and he shewed me the particular one, from which he flattered himself that success might ultimately crown his labours. The utmost care and

and attention are neceffary to keep the lamps perpetually alive, like the facred Flame in the Temple of Vefta, or among the difciples of Zoroafter. Strong charcoal fires are maintained for the purpofe; the amufement being by no means among the number of thofe fuited to perfons of a narrow fortune.

Some days fince, finding myfelf alone with the nobleman in queftion, to whofe friendfhip I have great obligations, and who is one of the moft pleafing, amiable, and communicative men exifting; I afked him what were his notions and opinions relative to the object of his refearch. I entreated him to inform me, whether it was merely as a recreation that he profecuted it; or whether he ferioufly flattered himfelf with attaining in any degree the philofopher's ftone. "I will anfwer you," faid he, "with franknefs and precifion: The fearch "amufes me, awakens hope, animates my "mind, and prefents objects, at leaft to the "imagination, of the moft feducing kind. "It is, I grant, expenfive, but I am well "able

" able to ſupport ſuch a demand upon my " purſe. So much for the occupation con- " ſidered in itſelf. With reſpect to the ac- " compliſhment of the great object, the pro- " duction of a powder with which gold may " be made, I believe in the exiſtence and poſ- " ſibility of ſuch a ſubſtance: it is called in " the language of Alchymy, *Powder of Pro- " jection.* If I had an ounce of it, I could " produce gold in the following manner: " by applying to it a ſmall quantity of gold, " the metal is transformed into it; and gold " only can produce this effect, or enable " me to increaſe, to any extent that I pleaſe, " the *Powder of Projection.* If I afterwards " apply a ſmall quantity of it ſo compoſed, " to any baſer metals, as lead, iron, or cop- " per, I can change them into gold; ſo that " with a ſmall proportion of gold, I can " always have powder ſufficient to produce " an immenſe quantity. By mixing certain " ingredients in it, I can deprive it of its " virtue, and revive it at pleaſure; but none " except myſelf, or an adept *of the ſame ſchool,* " can reſtore it when thus diſguiſed and

" trans-

"transformed. I believe that many perſons, "who are no more, have attained and prac- "tiſed the art of making gold: nay, I believe "that there are ſuch perſons now exiſting in "Europe; but I am nevertheleſs very doubt- "ful of my own ſucceſs." It is unneceſſary to make any obſervations on the above account of the mode of attaining the philoſopher's ſtone; ſince a ſort of voluntary credulity ſeems to be the principal, and almoſt the only requiſite in the proceſs.

The memory of Paracelſus is held in high veneration at Vienna: he was one of the extraordinary men whom the Emperor Rodolph the Second, the great patron of philoſophers, chymiſts, and pretenders to ſcience, had aſſembled in his Court at Prague, towards the beginning of the laſt century. Paracelſus boldly declared himſelf in poſſeſſion of the ſecret of the philoſopher's ſtone; and they ſtill ſhew a houſe here in the Leopoldſtadt ſuburb, where it is ſaid he changed a piece of braſs money into gold. Every body ſeems to be perſuaded of the fact; and as a confirmation of it, there is in the

the "Belvidere" palace, a picture which I have seen, that represents Paracelsus in the act. I imagine, however, that the evidence of the painting will not be admitted as incontrovertible, beyond the limits of Vienna.

If any degree of positive testimony could establish the doctrine of transmuting metals, it may be obtained here. I have heard persons named, who are either now alive, or lately dead, of whose faculty to make gold, nobody seems to entertain a doubt. A prince of the illustrious family of Lichtenstein, is generally believed to have been master of the secret; by availing himself of which, it is pretended that he laid the foundation of the immense property enjoyed by his descendants: his Christian name was John Adam, and he was great uncle to Prince Francis, the present head of the Lichtenstein family. I am assured that when he came to the succession, his annual income did not exceed thirty thousand florins, or a little more than three thousand pounds sterling. During his life he built several splendid palaces, either at Vienna,

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or on his various eſtates; and his manner of living, wherever he reſided, was magnificent in the extreme. Yet, notwithſtanding theſe expences, which were more than ſufficient to have exhauſted his original patrimony, he left at his deceaſe, lands to the value of above four hundred thouſand florins a year. Nay, they add, that ſuch was his command of ready money, in conſequence of poſſeſſing the philoſopher's ſtone, as to compel the Court to interfere, and to put a ſtop to his further purchaſes, or he would have bought almoſt all Bohemia and Moravia. With whatever contempt ſuch ſtories might be treated in London, they excite no ridicule here.

The ſcience of making gold is not the only extraordinary or viſionary object of reſearch, ardently purſued at Vienna: there are perſons here credulous or ſanguine enough to believe in the exiſtence of drugs and potions, by which health, vigour, and even life, may be prolonged beyond their uſual limits. I have converſed with men who affect to have attained ſuch ſecrets;

and the ſame nobleman whom I have already mentioned, preſented me, not long ago, a vial, containing a bright yellow liquid, which he aſſured me, taken from time to time in ſmall quantities, would tend to counteract the progreſs of age, or the effect of indiſpoſition. Unfortunately I want faith for the experiment, without which I imagine it would be of little benefit. St. Germain, who is now ſaid to be alive at Hamburgh, pretends, that by means of chymical diſcoveries, he has already ſurmounted the deſtiny of man, and is above two or three hundred years of age. Impudent as the impoſture may be, he would find believers here, even among the higher orders of ſociety. I ought, however, in juſtice to ſay, before I quit the ſubject, that thoſe perſons who are moſt warmly engaged either in the purſuit after the philoſopher's ſtone, or any other viſionary attempt connected with it, are ſtill perfectly conſcious of the ridicule that attaches to the thing itſelf. In order to avoid it they uſually either conceal their occupation, or affect to join in the laugh againſt

againſt themſelves. The progreſs of reaſon and of true philoſophy, can nevertheleſs alone put a total end to purſuits, ſo generally and ſo deeply imbibed.

The public diverſions, as well as the theatrical amuſements of Vienna, do not correſpond with the ideas which, as ſtrangers, we are naturally led to entertain of the metropolis of the German Empire, the reſidence of the modern Cæſars. Few European capitals are more deficient in exhibitions or entertainments of this nature. There is, indeed, a company of French comedians, who commonly repair here every winter; but they are ſo indifferent, as to render their performance ſcarcely ſupportable. It is otherwiſe at the German theatre, where the repreſentation is excellent. Madame Sacco, who plays the firſt tragic parts, may rank with the fineſt actreſſes of Germany, France, or England. Vienna poſſeſſes neither an Italian opera, nor "Ballet;" and during Lent no diverſions of a public kind are permitted, except concerts. The maſked balls or Ridottos in

 Carnival,

Carnival, are held in the Imperial palace; where the apartments appropriated to them, are noble, ſpacious, and convenient. I have frequently ſeen more than eighteen hundred perſons in the great ball room. The whole expence being defrayed by the Court, the profits ariſing from it are appropriated of courſe to the Government. None of the public amuſements are expenſive; the price of admiſſion to the Ridottos is only two florins, or ſcarcely an Engliſh crown piece.

In Lent, it is pleaſant on a holiday, to viſit "Heren-Haltz," a chapel ſituated about half a mile to the ſouth of Vienna. Devotion and amuſement carry thither multitudes of every rank, and of both ſexes I have met the emperor himſelf on foot, mixed among the crowd. It is equally curious and entertaining to mingle with the peaſants, of whom Sclavonians, Greeks, and Hungarians compoſe a principal part. They walk, pray, take refreſhments, and return in the evening to Vienna. It is accounted a pious work, a ſort of pilgrimage, to viſit

"Heren-

" Heren-Haltz" in Lent. People of condition either remain in their carriages, or walk, as they chance to prefer; and I have feen ten or twelve thoufand perfons there of a Sunday, when the weather has been fine.

French may be denominated the common and univerfal language among perfons in upper life at Vienna. German is comparatively little ufed in mixed company; and the Auftrians fpeak fo bad a dialect of it, that a native of Drefden or of Mentz, where the pureft German is fpoken, has no fmall difficulty to converfe with them. Italian is generally underftood, and many of the Milaneze, as well as the Mantuan nobility, are to be found here every winter, whom bufinefs, ambition, pleafure, or curiofity, attract to the feat of Government. Englifh is extremely in vogue, particularly among the ladies, moft of whom read and underftand it: feveral among them fpeak it with great eafe and propriety. But French is indifpenfable, and far more ufeful as well as neceffary for a ftranger, than German. It was otherwife formerly, under the reigns of

 Leopold

Leopold and Charles the Sixth. Thofe Princes, nurfed in hereditary antipathy to the Houfe of Bourbon, and almoft conftantly engaged in war with that Family, held in deteftation every thing connected with France: language, drefs, manners, all were odious. Italian then conftituted the elegant and courtly vehicle of expreffion. French was never pronounced at Court; and it would have been almoft a crime to have come into the prefence of the Sovereign, in a fuit of cloaths of the Parifian mode. I have heard perfons affert, who remember the times to which I allude, that any ftranger who appeared in the drawing-room with white filk ftockings, attracted attention; and that Charles the Sixth commonly faid of fuch a one, looking at him with averfion, "That is a curfed Frenchman!" But the late Emperor Francis brought with him to Vienna the fashions, language, and alliance of that country. As he never could fpeak German perfectly, he always expreffed himfelf in French. The Court foon followed the example: their

animoſity to France was inſenſibly oblite-rated; and the connexions of marriage ſince formed with the various branches of the Bourbon family, have almoſt completely done away the ancient enmity between the two countries.

The climate of Vienna, as well as of Auſtria, though dry, keen, and ſalubrious, is conſidered as too ſharp and penetrating for perſons ſubject to diſorders of the lungs. Rain is not frequent. The winters are very rigorous; yet it is rather uncommon for the principal ſtream of the Danube to be frozen over from ſide to ſide. The cir-cumſtance did not take place during the whole of laſt winter; but, about three weeks ago, it was completely frozen acroſs for a few days. I made an excurſion into Hungary, at that time; and I not only croſſed the Danube on the ice, oppoſite the city of Preſburg, where it is very broad, but I ſaw waggons heavily laden, which paſſed with perfect ſafety. In February and March, unlike our climate, the weather is generally very fine, nor are fogs common

at any ſeaſon. During ſummer the heat is frequently oppreſſive, particularly within the walls of Vienna. A ſtill more diſagreeable attendant on warm weather, is the duſt, uſually increaſed by the winds that blow with violence, and which are accounted abſolutely neceſſary in order to preſerve the ſalubrity of the air. The duſt is indeed one of the greateſt inconveniences to which the city is ſubject, no precautions being taken to diminiſh it by watering the ſtreets; and even in February I have found it very unpleaſant. But, every advantage fairly balanced, the climate is far ſuperior to that of London, leſs inconſtant and rainy, exempt from the unwholeſome fogs ſo common on the banks of the Thames, and more favourable to the prolongation of health, beauty, and life. Here I ſhall cloſe this long letter.

# LETTER XXX.

*Reigns of Leopold, Joseph the First, and Charles the Sixth.—Accession of Maria Theresa.—Her harangue to the Hungarian Diet.—Coronation at Presburgh.—Her person, manners, and conjugal attachment.—Funeral vault of the Imperial Family.—Death of the Archduchess Josepha.—Allotment of the Empress's time.—Her devotion.—Audiences.—Prejudices and partialities.—Palace of Schönbrun.—Archduchesses Maria, Elizabeth, and Christina.—Anecdotes of the last mentioned Princess; her marriage, and ascendency over the Empress.—Character of Maria Theresa.—Her virtues, talents, and administration.*

VIENNA, *February* 11, 1779.

THE reign of the present Empress Queen comprizes a period the most interesting of any in the annals of the House of Austria, since the death of the Emperor Charles the Fifth. Its duration, which already exceeds eight-and-thirty years; the

critical circumſtances under which it commenced; the wars which, with various ſucceſs, have marked its progreſs; laſtly, the vaſt augmentation of her power and territory, produced by the partition of Poland, added to the recent ſeizure of Lower Bavaria: all theſe events conduce to render Maria Thereſa an object of peculiar attention, not only as a ſovereign, but as an individual. Her character, adminiſtration, policy, and actions, which have ſo eſſentially affected the felicity, as well as the tranquillity of Europe in the preſent age, will awaken the warmeſt curioſity, mixed with the livelieſt intereſt, to the lateſt poſterity.

Her grandfather Leopold, a prince who experienced the greateſt reverſes and viciſſitudes of fortune, paſſed his long reign of near half a century, in a perpetual, but unequal conflict, with two powerful ſtates, Turkey and France. Driven from his capital in 1683, by the forces of the former, he owed his preſervation ſolely to the ſuccours brought him by John Sobieſki, King of Poland, who ſaved Vienna when reduced to the laſt extremity,

tremity, and prevented Auſtria from paſſing under the Ottoman yoke. It was not eaſy at that time to foreſee that Leopold, from a ſtate of ſuch depreſſion, would in the courſe of a few years become more formidable than ever. The arms of the Duke of Lorrain and Prince Eugene not only recovered Hungary from the Turks, but greatly extended its frontiers; while the genius and fortune of the Duke of Marlborough, by the memorable victory of Blenheim, expelled the French from the heart of Germany, humbled Louis the Fourteenth, and elevated Leopold to the ſummit of human greatneſs. He expired almoſt immediately afterwards, leaving his houſe in a ſtate of unexpected proſperity, to which he had neither contributed by his talents, by his courage, nor by his exertions of any kind.

Joſeph, who ſucceeded, was a Prince of very different, and of much ſuperior natural endowments. Active in the field, and vigorous in the cabinet, rapid no leſs than deciſive in his political character, he was formed to ſuſtain with ability the fabrick

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reared under his father. But, the term of his life was short; and he was carried off by the small-pox, after a reign of only six years, at one of the most critical periods of the great war, undertaken with a view to fix the Crown of Spain on the head of his younger brother, Charles. Joseph's premature death may be said to have produced the peace of Utrecht; it established Philip the Fifth on the Spanish Throne, and completely changed the destiny of Europe. The present Prince Auersperg, who is fourscore, was a page in the service of Joseph, and assisted about his person during that monarch's last illness. Conversing with him on the subject, a few days since, he assured me, that the physicians not only kept the Emperor in a room, from which all circulation or introduction of fresh air was entirely excluded; but, that they caused him to be wrapt in near twenty yards of English scarlet broad cloth, at the time when the small-pox was at its height. Such was the practice of physic at Vienna, scarcely seventy years ago. Even now the mode of treatment is little

little better underſtood, either in Auſtria, or in Bavaria. Two ſucceſſive Empreſſes, and no leſs than ſix Archdukes or Ducheſſes, have fallen victims to the ſame fatal malady, within the laſt thirty or forty years.

The brother and ſucceſſor of Joſeph, Charles the Sixth, a Prince of very limited capacity, indolent and paſſive, reſembled Leopold in the leading features of his character: yet, during more than twenty years of his reign, the Auſtrian dominions continued to increaſe Naples, the Milaneze, Mantua, and the Low Countries, which were ceded to Charles by the treaty of Utrecht; Sicily, which he afterwards received in exchange for Sardinia, together with the Kingdom of Servia, a province wreſted by his arms from the Turkiſh Sultans, prodigiouſly augmented his power. At the Peace of Peterwaradin, in 1716, he might be ranked among the greateſt, as well as the moſt fortunate Monarchs in Europe. But, the evening of his life did not correſpond with the ſplendor and proſperity of its meridian. Prince Eugene, who contributed ſo much

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to illustrate it by his victories, had the misfortune to survive himself. Naples and Sicily were lost on one hand; while on the other, the Turks, emboldened by the weakness of the Emperor's councils, expelled the Austrians from Servia, recovered Belgrade, defeated the Imperial commanders, and seemed to be on the point of again over-running Hungary; as they had done under the Solymans and the Selims, in the preceding century. Amidst these humiliating and disastrous circumstances, Charles expired, of a disorder produced by eating a dish of mushrooms: leaving behind him no male issue, a beaten and dispirited army, an empty exchequer, and a feeble guarantee purchased or extorted from foreign powers, as the best support to the tottering grandeur of his family, assailed by enemies on every side.

During the life of the Emperor Joseph, as that Prince was destitute of sons, and the wa[illegible]ly hope of perpetuating the Austrian line phy[illegible]red in the Archduke Charles; his ago[illegible]iage constituted an object of the first political

political importance. Among all the Princesses of Germany distinguished for beauty, who seemed to give the fairest promise of posterity, Elizabeth Christina, daughter of Louis Duke of Brunswic Blankenberg, was selected. But, as Charles was then in Spain, contending for the Crown of that kingdom, at the head of an army composed of Germans and English; the young Princess was sent thither, and the nuptials were solemnized in 1707, at Barcelona. When he quitted Catalonia, about four years afterwards, on the death of his brother Joseph, to repair to Germany; she remained behind, till circumstances enabled her to rejoin him at Vienna. Her personal attractions, which raised her to the Imperial Throne, had already suffered some diminution, before her first interview with the Archduke. I have heard the Countess Uhlfeldt say, who remembered her, that previous to her landing at Barcelona, she was so stung by the Musquetos, as to occasion a violent swelling in her face. With a view to diminish the effects of so mortifying an accident, by which her

her features were entirely disfigured, a lotion was prescribed, that produced indeed the effect of allaying the inflammation; but destroyed the exquisite delicacy of her complexion, which she never recovered to the end of her life.

The mild virtues of her mind and character, added to the charms of her person, effectually secured the esteem, while they conciliated no less the affections of her husband. She survived him near ten years, and was a witness of the political storms which agitated the commencement of her daughter's reign. Towards the latter part of her life, the late Empress was attacked with dropsical symptoms in her legs and extremities, which incapacitated her for walking. Whenever she appeared in the drawing-room, it became necessary to place napkins under her feet, to receive the water that ran from them in great quantity. Maria Theresa inherits, with many of her mother's amiable qualities, this corporal ailment, which seems to be constitutional, and naturally augments with the progress of age. After giving birth to vari-

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ous children of both ſexes, of whom only two daughters ſurvived, the late Empreſs brought into the world a ſon. His birth, which happened in 1718, was celebrated with teſtimonies of univerſal joy, as an earneſt of the prolongation of the Auſtrian male line. But theſe premature hopes were almoſt as ſoon extinguiſhed, the young Prince being carried off in the ſame year: an event which was occaſioned, if we may credit Lady Wortley Montagu, by imprudently weaning him. His deceaſe opened the ſucceſſion to his ſiſter Maria Thereſa, who, while yet in infancy, began to be conſidered as probably ſole heireſs to the vaſt dominions of the Houſe of Auſtria.

She was born in May 1717, and might juſtly be regarded as one of the greateſt alliances which had ever preſented itſelf to ambition. Since Mary of Burgundy, daughter of Charles the Bold, who brought the ſeventeen provinces of the Low Countries in dowry to the Emperor Maximilian, none ſo great had ariſen in modern Europe. After long heſitation, Charles the Sixth ſe-

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lected for her husband Francis of Lorrain, Grand Duke of Tuscany, a Prince whose similarity of age, added to his personal qualities and accomplishments, rendered him worthy of so distinguished a choice. By a fortunate concurrence of circumstances, he was not less acceptable to the young Archduchess, than to her father; and the marriage was celebrated at Vienna with extraordinary magnificence, on the first of February, 1736. The ruinous war against the Turks, which covered with dishonour the last years of Charles's reign, and embittered the evening of his life, followed shortly afterwards. It was at this time that Maria Theresa accompanied the Grand Duke her husband to Florence, after the decease of the last Prince of the family of Medicis. She returned from thence to Vienna, where she was present at the important moment of the Emperor's death, on the 20th of October, 1740.

Never, perhaps, did any Princess ascend a Throne under circumstances of greater peril, or which demanded more fortitude, energy, and

and perſonal reſolution. Surrounded with enemies, deſtitute of allies, and attacked by the moſt powerful adverſaries; it was long doubtful whether ſhe would not be buried under the ruins of the Houſe of Auſtria. While Frederic King of Pruſſia unexpectedly marched into Sileſia, which he reduced; the French and Bavarians appeared at the gates of Vienna. It is difficult to imagine a more intereſting object, than the repreſentative and heireſs of ſo many Emperors, contending for the vaſt ſucceſſion devolved to her, and finding reſources in the firmneſs of her own character. Even the circumſtances of her ſex, youth, beauty, and miſfortunes, contributed to increaſe the general intereſt taken in her fate. Driven from her capital, ſhe retired into Hungary, where, from the loyalty of a martial and generous people, ſhe derived the moſt ſolid, as well as effectual ſupport. It was then that ſhe made the celebrated harangue commemorated by Voltaire, which operated ſo powerfully on the hearts of her audience, and

which is ſtill remembered here with enthuſiaſtic pleaſure.

I have converſed with many perſons of the higheſt quality, who were preſent on that occaſion: I never ſaw any who could mention it without emotion; and all agree in aſſerting, that the ſcene was the moſt touching to be conceived. It was not the cold diſcloſure of political or pecuniary embarraſſments, formally made by a Sovereign from the Throne, and followed by the demand of ſupplies for carrying on a war. It was the ſupplication of a young and beautiful woman in diſtreſs, who, as her laſt refuge, in the midſt of foreign invaſion, threw herſelf on the affections of a nation, that had experienced from her anceſtors, and even from her immediate predeceſſors, the ſevereſt treatment. Hungary, under Leopold and Joſeph the Firſt, preſented a frightful picture of perpetual inſurrections, as perpetually repreſſed by executions, and by the utmoſt ſeverity of vindictive deſpotiſm. Count Koller, who is himſelf a Hungarian, and who then repreſented one of the firſt officers

officers of State, has frequently related to me every circumſtance that attended Maria Thereſa's harangue. His own words will convey the moſt lively, as well as the moſt faithful picture of a ſcene, than which antiquity furniſhes nothing more ſublime and affecting. In the hands of Livy or of Tacitus, how beautiful would have been its effect, and how wide its operation, increaſed by the lapſe of time, which magnifies every object!

"While the Hungarian Diet," ſaid Count Koller, "which had been convoked at "Preſburg, was occupied in preparing "for the defence of the kingdom and of "the young Queen, we received a meſſage "from her Majeſty, ſummoning us to at-"tend her at the Caſtle. We immediately "obeyed; and when we were met in the "great hall, the Queen entered. She was "dreſſed in deep mourning, the year not "being quite expired ſince the deceaſe of "Charles the Sixth her father. A pro-"found and awful ſilence of ſome moments "enſued; her Majeſty being in diſtreſs, "which ſhe could not conceal, and which

 "incapacitated

"incapacitated her from uttering a ſingle "word. During this time her infant ſon, "the preſent Emperor, was brought in by "the firſt Lady of the Bedchamber, and "laid on a cuſhion before her. With an "action more eloquent than any oration, "ſhe took him in her arms, held him up to "the aſſembly, and while ſobs interrupted "her voice, ſhe addreſſed the Diet in Latin, "as is cuſtomary; a language which ſhe "ſpeaks as well as underſtands perfectly. "When ſhe came to the words, 'Agitur de "Regno Hungariæ, de perſona noſtra, pro- "libus noſtris, et corona. Ab omnibus "derelicti, unicé ad inclytorum ſtatuum "fidelitatem, arma, et Hungarorum priſ- "cam virtutem confugimus*;' we all, as if "animated by one ſoul, drew our ſabres, "exclaiming unanimouſly, 'Vitam et ſan- "guinem, pro majeſtate veſtra†!' We

* "The kingdom of Hungary, our perſon, our offspring, and our crown, are at ſtake! Abandoned by all, we fly to the fidelity, the arms, and the priſtine virtue of the famous Hungarian States."

† "Our lives and our blood for your Majeſty!"

"wept,

" wept, as did the Queen aloud; but they
" were tears of loyalty, of affection, and of
" indignation. In a few minutes after-
" wards we withdrew, in order to purſue the
" meaſures neceſſary for ſecuring the Hun-
" garian and Auſtrian dominions, at such a
" moment of public danger and diſtreſs.
" The Emperor Francis was not preſent;
" but he remained in a room adjoining,
" from which he could diſtinctly hear every
" thing that took place. From the begin-
" ning to the cloſe, this celebrated ſcene,
" which has furniſhed ſo much matter for
" hiſtory, hardly laſted more than twelve
" or fifteen minutes."

Maria Thereſa, it muſt be remembered, had previouſly gained the affections, and ſecured the allegiance of the Hungarian nation, by voluntarily ſubmitting to take the coronation oath of Andrew the Second, which ratified, in terms the moſt unlimited, all their privileges. After a conceſſion, at once ſo wiſe and ſo magnanimous, ſhe was ſolemnly crowned Queen of Hungary at Preſburg, in June 1741. I am aſſured by

those who witnessed the ceremony of her coronation, that she was then one of the most charming women in Europe; her figure elegant, her shape fine, and her demeanour altogether majestic. Every portrait of her which I have seen, confirms the assertion. Though her eyes were of a light grey, they were very expressive, and full of sweetness. An air of delicacy, occasioned by her having recently lain in, increased her natural attractions. When the Hungarian Crown was placed upon her head, it proved to be so much too large, that it was found necessary to put cushions round her forehead, in order to prevent it from falling down over her face. Its weight becoming insupportable after some time, when she sat down to dinner in public, the Crown was taken off. The heat of the weather, and the length of the ceremony through which she had passed, diffused a glow over her countenance that augmented her beauty; while her fine hair flowing down over her shoulders in ringlets, and her whole figure was captivating to the greatest degree. We must not forget these

little

little perſonal circumſtances, when we contemplate the enthuſiaſm of loyalty, with which ſhe found means to inſpire her ſubjects. It may indeed juſtly be doubted whether Elizabeth herſelf ever awakened more attachment among the Engliſh, at any period of her life or reign.

Maria Thereſa's perſon now retains no trace of the charms which ſhe once poſſeſſed; and it is even difficult to conceive from her preſent aſpect and appearance, that ſhe ever was handſome. So total a change ought not however, to ſurprize, when it is recollected that beſides her advanced time of life, and the number of children whom ſhe has brought into the world, the ſmall-pox completed the ruin of her features. She caught that cruel diſtemper from viſiting her daughter-in-law, the preſent Emperor's ſecond wife, twelve years ago, in 1767; and during her illneſs, Maria Thereſa's life was in the moſt imminent danger. Previous to that period, I am aſſured that ſhe ſtill might have been termed handſome, though ſhe was become large and heavy. In addition to the ravage

made in her face by the ſmall-pox, an accident which happened ſubſequent to her recovery, totally altered her caſt of countenance, and obliterated whatever remained of her former ſelf. Being on a journey from Vienna to Preſburg, ſhe was overturned from an open carriage. In the fall ſhe bruiſed her noſe and face ſo violently, that the ſwelling and inflammation, occaſioned by it, threatened at firſt to deprive her of ſight. The care and ſkill of her medical attendants prevented that diſaſter; but the looſe gravel upon which ſhe fell, ſo disfigured her features, that they are no longer recognizable.

The Empreſs Queen is now grown corpulent, unwieldy, and infirm. Her face, though lacerated by the marks of the ſmall-pox, encreaſed by the effects of her fall, retains nevertheleſs ſuch an expreſſion of goodneſs and benevolence, that when ſhe ſmiles, her features for an inſtant almoſt become pleaſing. She owes no advantages to the decoration of the toilet, her hair being combed back very flat under her cap, on the crown of her head; and behind, it is cut ſhort on

her neck. In order to conceal its being grey, ſhe always wears powder. Every thing about her perſon is dark and mournful; nor has ſhe ever, ſince the death of her huſband, the late Emperor, worn any dreſs except the deepeſt weeds. A black crape cap, which comes very low over her forehead, ſo as almoſt to conceal her hair, is little calculated to adorn, or to ſet off her face. On no occaſion whatever has ſhe put on diamonds, or other female ornaments, ſince ſhe became a widow. Her legs and feet, like thoſe of her mother, being grown feeble, and almoſt debilitated, ſhe is no longer capable of taking any conſiderable exerciſe on foot; and ſhe uſually wears gaiters about her legs, on account of the ſupport which they give her when walking. In the Drawing-room ſhe uſes a glaſs, in order to diſtinguiſh perſons at a few paces diſtant from her. She is in fact very ſhort-ſighted; or rather perhaps, age and infirmities having impaired her ſenſe of ſeeing, oblige her to have recourſe to artificial aſſiſtance.

When

When young, Maria Theresa was exceedingly fond of dancing, masking, and every public diversion: but it is almost unnecessary to say, that she has long renounced all such amusements. I have frequently seen her sit down to cards in her drawing-room, on public days; and at the Court balls she usually remains till about eleven o'clock at night, seated as a spectatress of the dances: but, she always retires before midnight; and in her own apartments she never plays at cards, or at any other game. In commemoration likewise of her widowed state, as a sort of austerity which may mark her grief for the loss of a husband whom she tenderly loved, she has never inhabited since his decease, the principal range of apartments in the palace at Vienna. Those in which she constantly lives, have a southern exposition; but, she is so little susceptible of cold, that in the midst of winter she usually keeps all the windows open during the day, and often cannot bear a fire in her chamber. The Emperor, on the contrary, is so chilly, that he says he is almost frozen when he goes to

visit

visit his mother; and he is obliged to put on a fur coat, in order to enable himself to support, for any length of time, the air of her apartment. Her residence is on the third floor of the Palace; and the rooms which she occupies, though commodious and spacious, are nothing less than splendid.

Antiquity does not furnish any model of conjugal affection and fidelity more perfect than the one exhibited by the Empress Queen. Like the elder Agrippina, she presses to her heart the urn that contains the ashes of her husband; and time, which has softened, cannot obliterate her grief. Francis died suddenly on the 18th of August 1765, without previously confessing to a Priest, or receiving absolution. Unless prevented by indisposition, Maria Theresa never fails to repair on the eighteenth day of every month, very early in the morning, to the vault of the convent of the Capucins in Vienna, where his remains are deposited. Even in winter, she is there long before dawn, notwithstanding the rigor of the season, and her many infirmities. The vault is lighted up, while

on

on her knees she pours out supplications for the repose of his soul. The whole month of August she considers as a penitential time, dedicated to his memory; and she generally passes it at the palace of Schönbrun, in a sort of gloomy and devout retirement, amidst masses, Requiems, and services for the dead. However deeply tinctured with human weakness and superstition, it is impossible not to respect the source, and to honour the principles, which inspire so exemplary a conduct.

Having mentioned the vault of the Capucins, where the late Emperor is buried, it is indispensable for many reasons, that I should endeavour to give an accurate idea of that funereal repository. Louis the Fourteenth is said to have abandoned the Palace of St. Germain, among other reasons, because from the windows he beheld the Abbey of St. Denis, where he was one day to repose after death. As if the Princes of the House of Austria, on the contrary, wished to have mortality constantly before their eyes, and present to their imagination; the vault

vault in which they are interred, is situated near the Imperial Palace, almost in the centre of Vienna; under the church of the Capucins, which was finished in 1622, by the Emperor Ferdinand the Second. I have visited this place more than once, not without sensations of a solemn and melancholy kind. The vault, or rather subterranean chamber, is of considerable size; the light being admitted into it, though in most parts very imperfectly. All the Emperors, Empresses, and their male as well as female issue, for more than a century past, are there ranged side by side. Among them I particularly remarked the monuments of Leopld, Joseph the First, and Charles the Sixth, which are magnificent. Near the last mentioned one, is buried the young Archduke, Maria Theresa's brother, whom I have already mentioned, and whose premature death was a subject of general lamentation. The inscription upon the tomb of Eleanor of Neubourg, third wife of the Emperor Leopold, which contrasts not a little with the panegyrics commonly inscribed to sovereigns, was dictated by herself.

It

It is such as a Carmelite, or a Magdalen, oppressed with a consciousness of her sins, might have chosen to be engraved upon her tomb-stone; and I copied it for its humility, as well as for the religious cast of expression:

"Eleonore,
"Pauvre Pecheresse!
"morte le 19 Janvier,
"1719."

She forbade any other commemoration or eulogium to be added.

The monument, erected to the late Emperor Francis and Maria Theresa, is not composed of marble, but of a species of bronze or metal; having been constructed by the present Empress's directions, as long ago as the year 1743, when she was not six-and-twenty. Here she has destined her remains to be deposited with those of her husband, whenever Providence shall call her hence; a period to which she has always looked forward, not merely without terror or repugnance, but with a degree of complacency. Unlike the generality of tombs, where

where the persons whom they commemorate, are commonly laid recumbent, their hands joined in prayer; here the two figures of the Emperor and Empress are represented in a half reposing attitude. Francis, partly raised on one side, seems regarding his wife with an expression of fondness, while the Genius of immortality crowns them with a wreath. Unfortunately, this monument, intended by Maria Theresa only to excite images of the most solemn and melancholy kind; by some perversity of human nature, or by some original vice of the design itself, awakens ideas the most remote from dissolution and mortality. The posture of the Emperor, which, it must be owned is a little equivocal; the tenderness displayed in the looks of both the figures; added to the warm attachment which, it is well known, her Majesty always felt for Francis, who was then young and handsome; these circumstances have given rise to many ludicrous or sarcastic remarks upon the tomb itself. Persons who are disposed to see the ridiculous, rather than the serious side of every

every object, have thought, not altogether without reason, that it bore more resemblance to a nuptual couch where the lovers are crowned by Hymen, than to the gloomy solemnity of a Mausoleum, destined to contain the ashes of the dead.

Round this singular monument, ranged in funeral pomp, repose the two wives of Joseph the Second, together with the various Archdukes and Duchesses, who have been successively carried off by death, during the course of the present reign. At a little distance, in an obscure recess, stands an altar and a crucifix, at the feet of which Maria Theresa, like another Penitent, is accustomed to implore the divine forgiveness for the offences of her husband and her ancestors. On the anniversaries of her father's and mother's decease, as well as on various others, she rarely fails to descend into the vault, and there to pass a considerable time in prayer. Not content with offering up her own supplications to Heaven, she used frequently to compel her daughters to accompany her thither, and to join with her in religious exercises.

cises. Her injudicious piety was, it is too much to be feared, the cause of one of the most tragical events which has ever taken place among the individuals of the Imperial family: I mean, the death of the Archduchess Josepha. Her story, though short, will excite no less attention, than it awakens concern and compassion.

She was the sixth daughter of the Empress, born in March 1751. Nature had conferred on her a person uncommonly beautiful; and its effect was increased by the sweetness of her manners, which rendered her universally beloved. Her elder sister, the Archduchess Jane, had been demanded by the present King of Spain, Charles the Third, in marriage for his son Ferdinand the Fourth, King of the two Sicilies. That Princess having been carried off by death, the Archduchess Josepha was therefore destined to supply her place, as future Queen of Naples. All the preparations for her journey thither were made; she was publickly betrothed on the eighth of September 1767; and the day of her

departure for the capital of her new dominions, being fixed for the fifteenth of the following month, ſhe was already treated as a crowned head. But, Providence had decreed that the marriage ſhould never be accompliſhed, and that ſhe ſhould follow her ſiſter to the grave.

During the interval between her eſpouſals and the time named for her quitting Vienna, her mother, anxious that the Princeſs ſhould perform her devotions for the laſt time among the tombs of her relations, before ſhe left Auſtria to go to Italy, inſiſted on her viſiting the vault in the convent of the Capucins. The young Queen expreſſed great repugnance to the melancholy ceremony; but, the Empreſs perſiſted in obliging her to ſubmit to it. In vain the Princeſs implored to be excuſed, alledging a terror and a dread that ſhe could not ſurmount: Maria Thereſa, inflexible, rejected all her intreaties. It is generally aſſerted that ſhe burſt into tears, when ſhe entered the coach that was to conduct her to the convent; and that while in the vault, engaged at prayer,

ſhe

she was seized with a shivering. Whether there be any exaggeration in these circumstances or not, it is certain that she sickened almost immediately on her return home to the palace. The small-pox made its appearance soon afterwards; a disorder which has been peculiarly fatal to the Austrian family; and notwithstanding every medical assistance, she expired on the fifteenth of October 1767, the precise day destined for her departure to Naples.

Many comments, as well as reflections, were made on so melancholy a catastrophe; and the Empress was universally censured for having compelled the reluctant Princess to visit a vault filled with dead bodies. But, another circumstance increased the apprehension, while it strengthened the belief, that her death might be too justly attributed to that visit. It was recollected that scarcely four months had elapsed, and those months the hottest of the whole year, since the Empress Maria Josepha, second wife of the present Emperor, had been buried in the same vault. The fact was well known, that

the ſmall-pox of which the Empreſs died, was of a nature ſo extremely malignant, as to render it totally impoſſible to embalm her body. Many perſons did not heſitate to declare, that notwithſtanding all the precautions taken, the ſmell of her corpſe was perceptible, and even capable of communicating infection. In every caſe, the imprudence of the Empreſs Queen's conduct was incontrovertible. The Archducheſs's death filled the palace with conſternation; and the amiable qualities by which ſhe was diſtinguiſhed, added to the general affliction. Her brother the preſent Emperor, who loved her with predilection, attended her during the whole progreſs of her diſorder, and never quitted her till ſhe breathed her laſt in his arms.

The deceaſe of two Archducheſſes who were deſtined in turn to be Queens of Naples, together with the ſingular and diſaſtrous circumſtances attending the laſt, almoſt induced Maria Thereſa to think of declining ſo inauſpicious an alliance. It muſt be confeſſed that even in a leſs ſuperſtitious Court, ſuch events might be regarded as ominous

ominous or ſiniſter. After ſome irreſolution, it was nevertheleſs determined to name the next of the Archducheſſes in order of birth, Maria Caroline, to ſupply the vacant place. But, the young Princeſs, little more than fifteen years of age, terrified at the recent death of her two ſiſters, expreſſed the greateſt repugnance to eſpouſe a Prince, whoſe alliance ſeemed to be fatal to the Auſtrian family. The Empreſs her mother's firmneſs, ſuſtained by Prince Kaunitz's reaſons and exhortations, ſurmounted, however, her oppoſition. In March 1768, ſhe was ſent to Naples; the *firſt* matrimonial pledge given to the Houſe of Bourbon, on the part of Auſtria. Her ſiſter Maria Amelia, who eſpouſed the Duke of Parma in 1769 was the *ſecond*. The *third* and laſt was the Archducheſs Maria Antonietta, married to the preſent King of France in 1770. Three daughters, ſucceſſively conferred on three princes of the family of Bourbon, may well be conſidered as a powerful cement between the two Crowns and countries. It was in a peculiar manner the work of the preſent

prime minifter, prince Kaunitz; and it is the meafure from which he claims the greateft political merit.

I return from this digreffion, to give a detail of the Emprefs Queen's life, the difpofition of her time, and her ordinary occupations. Pleafures, in the common acceptation of the term, fhe can fcarcely be faid to allow herfelf any. She rifes generally at a very early hour; during fummer at five, and even in January, at fix in the morning. After her private devotion, fhe hears a mafs, and proceeds immediately to difpatch bufinefs. Her conftant breakfaft is milk-coffee. At noon fhe hears a fecond mafs, and then her dinner is ferved, which by no means confifts of many difhes. Parfimonious of her time, fhe ufually dines alone, and inftantly refumes the confideration of public affairs. During the fummer, when fhe is moftly at the palace of Schonbrun in the vicinity of Vienna; if the weather permit, fhe frequently paffes feveral hours in a covered walk in the gardens, to which fhe can repair from her own apartments. The walk is on a level

a level with her chamber, in order to facilitate her paſſage to it. A centinel, ſtationed at the entrance, prevents all interruption; and the Empreſs has a little box, which is buckled round her waiſt, full of papers, letters, and memorials. She peruſes them all, remains four or five hours at a time in this employment, marks ſuch as appear to deſerve attention, and enters into the minuteſt detail upon every point. So wholly is ſhe occupied with concerns of ſtate, that it frequently happens, the Archducheſſes her daughters, though they reſide in the ſame palace, cannot procure a moment's acceſs to her, from the hour of her getting up till evening. At ſix o'clock the Empreſs finiſhes her application to buſineſs, and hears Benediction: a ceremony of devotion at which ſhe expects her daughters to be preſent. If they abſent themſelves, ſhe does not fail to expreſs her diſapprobation She even ſends to enquire if they are indiſpoſed; and ſometimes reprimands them with maternal authority, when ſhe meets them next day: but, ſince the death of the Archducheſs Joſepha,

she no longer permits them to accompany her in her visits to the vault of the imperial family. Between eight and half past, she commonly retires to bed. This is the exact relation of an ordinary day, as it is passed by Maria Theresa.

For the purpose of her commodiously hearing mass, as she cannot walk to any distance, or move up and down stairs without difficulty, on account of the debility of her legs, the floor of her bed-chamber opens. A chapel is prepared below, on the *second* story, and she remains in her own room on the *third*, while mass is performed beneath. I have been assured by ladies of the Court, who from their rank and functions could not mistake, or be liable to speak ignorantly, that she is generally occupied more than five hours every day, in acts of religion, and in prayer. Incredible as such a fact may appear, it is indisputably true; and her superstition naturally strengthens with the progress of age. In March last year, I well remember her being for three hours, from three o'clock till six in the afternoon, on her knees,

knees, in the cathedral of Vienna; imploring the divine interpofition to turn afide the war, with which fhe was menaced on account of the Bavarian fucceffion. The Archduchefs Elizabeth affured a lady not long fince, that "when fhe accompanied her "mother to chapel, fhe frequently remained "there for fuch a length of time, as fcarcely "to know at laft what fhe pronounced or "repeated." During Lent, the Emprefs practifes all the rigor of Catholic mortification and abftinence. No Carmelite can be more ftrict in the article of fafting, as well as in refraining from prohibited difhes; and the Archducheffes are compelled to obferve the fame renunciations. Even at the Emperor's table, I am affured that meat is rarely ferved. In the holy week, the Emprefs hears feveral maffes every morning, and paffes half the day in exercifes of devotion. It is to be regretted that her piety fhould thus degenerate into fuperftition, and that the enlightened or benevolent Sovereign fhould be almoft funk in the Devotee.

Notwithftanding the time which fhe thus facrifices

facrifices at the altar, it muft not however be imagined, that fhe is inattentive to public affairs. On the contrary, as I have already ftated, fhe dedicates to them a great portion of every day She regularly gives audience at ftated hours; and on the Tuefday of every week, fhe receives all her own minifters in the various departments. Prince Kaunitz alone is admitted to her prefence on the fhorteft notice, on all days, and at every hour. In compliance with the antient Etiquette of the Imperial Court, eftablifhed for centuries, all foreigners are prefented to her Majefty quite alone, in her own apartments. With a view to obtain information, fhe fets apart particular hours, when the loweft and meaneft of her fubjects are not only admitted to fee her, but are permitted to fpeak to her confidentially and freely. She frequently converfes with them, and when they have any thing to communicate to her of a nature peculiarly private, fhe even allows them to whifper in her ear. Very fecret and curious facts reach her, as may eafily be fuppofed, through thefe channels. Her women

and female attendants have likewife audiences, when the Emprefs hears their reports of all that paffes in Vienna. Unfortunately, fhe is too much inclined to liften to fuch narratives, and to credit ftories, often partial, miftaken, or malignant. It is one of her prevailing weakneffes to lend a too ready and credulous ear to the anecdotes thus brought her.

After reading the particulars here commemorated, it cannot excite furprife to find that Maria Therefa nourifhes many narrow and illiberal prejudices, unworthy of a great Sovereign. Neither exempt from, nor fuperior to the uncharitable notions, which bigotry neceffarily infpires, fhe firmly believes every heretic to be excluded from the divine mercy; but, of all heretics, fhe conceives the Englifh to be the moft impenitent, hardened, and irreclaimable. I know that fhe enjoined her youngeft fon, the Archduke Maximilian, when fhe permitted him to vifit France and the Low Countries, on no confideration whatever to pafs over into England. Her apprehenfion of his being

being corrupted by the contagious ſociety of London, and of his loſing all his religious principles or impreſſions, was the motive ot this prohibition. She exacted a ſimilar promiſe from the Emperor himſelf, when he went to Paris two years ago. "The Engliſh," ſaid ſhe to him, "are almoſt all Deiſts, Infidels, and Free-thinkers. I tremble, leſt an intercourſe with ſuch a nation ſhould contaminate your manners, and ſhake your belief in every thing ſacred among Catholics."

Maria Thereſa, it is believed, entertains on the contrary, a degree of partiality for the French nation. The political alliance, contracted between her and Louis the Fifteenth in 1756; joined to the marriage of her three daughters, particularly that of the youngeſt with the preſent King of France; have obliterated the ſentiments of enmity in which ſhe was educated, towards the French. It muſt likewiſe be remembered, that her huſband the late Emperor Francis, was the ſon of a French Princeſs, and that he was himſelf warmly attached to

that

that country. If the Empreſs herſelf has however imbibed or adopted theſe predilections, neither her Courtiers nor her ſubjects at large participate in them. The inferior claſſes of people retain all their antient deteſtation for the French. It ſeems to be inſurmountable, and manifeſts itſelf on a thouſand occaſions.

Her Imperial Majeſty commonly paſſes the whole ſummer, and great part of the autumn, at the palace of Schonbrun. She quits Vienna about the beginning of May, and returns to it again before the cloſe of October. In periods of public tranquillity, when her mind is unruffled and cheerful, ſhe is accuſtomed to viſit the palace of Laxembourg, which is about four leagues diſtant, and to paſs a month there: but during the laſt ſummer, while her two ſons, the Emperor, and the Archduke Maximilian, were abſent in Bohemia, and her armies were contending in the field, ſhe remained altogether at Schonbrun, in gloomy dejection. The palace itſelf is ſituated ſcarcely more than half a mile beyond the ſuburbs, to the

ſouth;

fouth; Jofeph the Firft, who began to build there, having only intended it for a little hunting-feat. His fucceffor, Charles the Sixth, conftructed a larger edifice, which was farther augmented and embellifhed by the late Emperor Francis, who paffionately liked the place, and expended confiderable fums in beautifying or adorning Schonbrun. The Emprefs is not lefs attached to it; and as her hufband was, while living, inexpref-fibly dear to her, his partiality is probably not the leaft of her motives for preferring it as a refidence.

The word Schonbrun fignifies "Belle "Source," and derives its name from a fpring near the palace, in the gardens, the water of which is accounted admirable. The Emprefs never drinks of any other; and every day during the whole winter, while fhe is in town, a mule comes from Schonbrun, loaded with water for her table. No pofi-tion can be more deftitute of natural advan-tages, a hill rifing before, and another be-hind, from each of which is beheld a charm-ing profpect; while on the contrary, fcarcely

any

any objects are to be ſeen from the palace, which ſtands in a valley. The gardens occupy a vaſt ſpace, ornamented with water-works, obeliſks, a Menagerie, and every embelliſhment of art: but they are damp, the cellars of the palace lying below the bed of the little river Wien, which runs in front. The edifice is large, the apartments ſplendid, and maintained at a great expence; Maria Thereſa laying out every year, many thouſand florins in repairs or additions. But, as the preſent Emperor her ſon, makes no ſecret of his diſlike to the ſituation, which is beſides too near the capital; it is not improbable that after her death Schonbrun will be abandoned, and perhaps may be converted by Joſeph the Second into barracks for the ſoldiery.

The fecundity of Maria Thereſa would not have been paſſed over in ſilence by Tacitus, in the delineation of her character and qualities. Thoſe who have beheld the late Emperor, his wife, and thirteen children of both ſexes, ſeated at table on public occaſions, aſſure me that it was one of the

moſt

moſt intereſting and pleaſing ſpectacles ever contemplated. Several of the Archducheſſes were highly favoured by nature. But, like the wife of Germanicus, Maria Thereſa, "infelici fecunditate fortunæ totiens ob-"noxia," has witneſſed the funerals of many of her children. I have already commemorated more than one inſtance. Of her numerous daughters, only two who are unmarried now remain alive. The firſt Mary Anne, eldeſt of all the Empreſs's iſſue, male or female, was born in 1738, two years before the deceaſe of Charles the Sixth. In her perſon ſhe is below the middle ſize, and a deformity in her configuration renders her lame; but I am told by perſons who know her intimately, that her mind is much cultivated and enlarged by an acquaintance with polite letters. Though ſhe enjoys the revenues of an Abbey at Prague, of which ſhe is the titular Abbeſs; that eccleſiaſtical dignity neither compels her to reſidence, nor ſubjects her to any renunciations. Having paſſed her fortieth year, ſhe no longer mixes in the amuſements of the Court or

capital, except on thofe particular occafions, when the Emprefs herfelf being prefent, fhe accompanies her mother to the Drawing-room.

The Archduchefs Elizabeth is not yet fix-and-thirty. Previous to her having caught the fmall-pox, it is univerfally af-ferted that her features were charming, and her face beautiful; but if they were fo, not a trace of that beauty now remains. The two fifters have each a fort of eftablifhment, confifting of a "Grand Maitre," and a "Grande Maitreffe." In other refpects, they lead a gloomy, tedious life; though the Archduchefs Elizabeth has not yet renounced public diverfions nor withdrawn herfelf from the amufements of the Carnival. Immured in the Imperial Palace, almoft def-titute of fociety, obliged to attend their mother wherever fhe moves, and compelled to affift at ceremonies or exercifes of devotion, as if they were nuns, rather than Princeffes; fcarcely are they known to exift by any of the foreign nations of Europe, and never were any perfons lefs objects of envy.

The Archducheſs Chriſtina, more favoured by nature, as well as by fortune, has at leaſt found means to emancipate herſelf from the confinement and ſubjection of her two ſiſters. She is unqueſtionably a very ſuperior woman, and merits that I ſhould enter with ſome minuteneſs into her character, and the hiſtory of her life. Having completed her thirty-ſixth year, ſhe has now paſſed the meridian of her beauty; but her perſon, in ſpite of a delicate conſtitution and very impaired health, ſtill poſſeſſes many charms. Her figure is of the middle ſize, well-formed, and finely proportioned; her eyes are full of vivacity, her features noble, as well as regular. Though naturally of a pale complexion, ſhe wears no rouge; a renunciation ſubmitted to, as may be preſumed, more from deference to the Empreſs's pleaſure, than from her own choice. Over all her limbs and motions is diffuſed an air of grandeur, which ſeems to announce high birth. Naturally diſtant and haughty, ſhe can nevertheleſs, when ſuch is her pleaſure, temper her demeanor with the moſt

gracious and winning condeſcenſion. It is difficult to imagine a Princeſs more formed to repreſent the Majeſty of the Throne. Nor is it only her perſon to which nature has been liberal; ſhe poſſeſſes talents capable of producing very important public conſequences, beneficial or injurious. Ambitious, enterprizing, and no way deficient in political courage, ſhe is not formed for the ſecluſion of private life, or for the uniform monotony of her mother's palace. Wherever ſhe appears, in Hungary, and in Italy, no leſs than in Auſtria, her exertions leave behind them the traces of her active mind. Verſed nevertheleſs in many of the ſofter accompliſhments of her ſex, ſhe dedicates her leiſure to the occupations of the pencil; and ſhe particularly excels in painting, as various apartments in the caſtle of Preſburg ſufficiently teſtify; where I have ſeen portraits of her performance, executed in a maſterly manner.

With ſuch perſonal and intellectual endowments, it cannot, or it ought not to excite ſurpriſe, that ſhe has always been the

favorite daughter of Maria Therefa; and that fhe poffeffes no inconfiderable afcendancy over her mother's political, as well as private conduct. Perhaps, that very influence may likewife explain the caufe of the Emperor her brother's little attachment, not to fay alienation, towards her. It is well known that he confiders her as a powerful rival, capable of fruftrating his views; and of impeding, if not totally overturning, his beft matured plans of ambition or policy, by awakening the Emprefs's fcruples, and touching her maternal feelings. At every period of her life, the Archduchefs Chriftina has acted a principal part in the diffentions, cabals, and private hiftory of the Imperial Family. The intimate friend and confident of Jofeph's firft wife, the Infanta Ifabella of Parma, fhe proved herfelf not lefs the enemy of his fecond, the unfortunate Bavarian. That Princefs, it is afferted, experienced fome mortifying effects of the Archduchefs's unkind offices, during the fhort and melancholy period of her matrimonial union with the prefent Emperor.

Francis, her father, had intentions of giving her in marriage to his nephew, the Duke of Chablais, half-brother to the reigning King of Sardinia; a Prince whose age, birth, and affinity to the late Emperor, rendered him a natural object of Francis's selection. But, the young Archduchess had already disposed of her affections in another quarter, to a more fortunate suitor. Prince Albert of Saxony, fourth son of Augustus the Third, King of Poland, entered young into the Austrian service: his person, if it could not be denominated handsome, was at least tall, manly, and well-made; his manners engaging, and his character every way unexceptionable. By his mother, the late Queen of Poland, who was daughter of Joseph the First, he descended from the Austrian line, and stood in a near degree of consanguinity to Maria Theresa herself. His elevated rank, which gave him frequent access to the Archduchesses, facilitated the means of rendering himself peculiarly acceptable to the object of his choice. But, on the other hand, a younger brother of

the Saxon family, whose only fortune, independent of his military appointments, was a moderate provision arising out of the Electoral revenues during life; however high his descent, or estimable his qualities, could not be considered as an equal, and still less as an advantageous match, for a daughter of the first crowned head in Europe. It is indeed generally supposed that the late Emperor would not have consented to such an alliance; and that if he had lived, the obstacles to her marriage with Prince Albert never could have been surmounted.

In the summer of the year 1765, when the Court of Vienna went into the Tyrol, the Archduchess Christina accompanied her father and mother. Francis was there met by the Duke of Chablais, and the propositions of his marriage were resumed, notwithstanding the repugnance for it manifested by the Princess. But, the emperor's sudden death at Inspruck, in the month of August, put an end to the negotiation; and so powerful were the Archduchess's supplications with Maria Theresa, that she soon afterwards consented

confented to give her daughter's hand to Prince Albert. They were married within eight months of Francis's deceafe, in April 1766, when fhe had nearly completed her twenty-fourth, as he had his twenty-eighth year. A daughter whom fhe brought him, lived only a very fhort time; and it is faid that fhe fuffered fo much during her lying-in, as to be rendered incapable of bearing more children. Their union has been however, in all other refpects, a happy one; and Prince Albert is fcarcely lefs beloved by the Emprefs, than are her own fons.

Previous to the accomplifhment of their nuptials, Maria Therefa refigned to her daughter and fon-in-law, the Duchy of Tefchen; a fmall and mountainous portion of Auftrian Silefia, the revenues of which they enjoy during their joint lives. If they have no iffue, it will again revert, at their deceafe, to the Crown. Still further to enable them to fupport their dignity, the Duke of Saxe-Tefchen, (for fo he is denominated,) has been created Captain-general and Governor of Hungary. In

that quality, he and the Archducheſs occupy the caſtle of Preſburg, where, during a part of the year, they reſide and hold their Court. But, as Maria Thereſa's attachment to them is too ſtrong, not to render her deſirous of enjoying their ſociety, they have apartments in the Imperial Palace, which they inhabit at pleaſure. A ſenſe of intereſt, not leſs than the feelings of affection, may be ſuppoſed to influence them in the frequent viſits which they make to Vienna. The Empreſs is naturally bounteous; and it is believed that her favorite daughter has not been wanting to improve to her own advantage, the moments of maternal tenderneſs.

But, it is not at Vienna alone, that the Archducheſs's talents have found a theatre worthy of their exertion. After emancipating herſelf from domeſtic reſtraint, ſhe undertook to liberate her ſiſter the Queen of Naples, from political fetters. During a viſit which the Archducheſs Chriſtina made, ſome years ſince, to the King and Queen of the Two Sicilies, ſhe effected a complete change in the adminiſtration of that country.

try. The present King of Spain, at his departure for Madrid, in 1759, when he acceded to that monarchy on the death of Ferdinand the Sixth, left his son a minor, as is well known, under the tuition of the Marquis Tanucci; who, at the head of a council of regency, governed Naples during many years. Things remained in the same situation, after the marriage of the young King, and his attainment to majority; no person being found who would venture to overturn the system adopted, or to remove the ministers placed by Charles the Third. But, the arrival of the Archduchess Christina at Naples, was the term of Tanucci's elevation. Encouraged by her exhortations, and directed by her counsels, the Queen her sister induced the King to displace the first minister, to model the government anew, and under the name of Sambuca, to assume himself the efficient power.

The Emperor her brother has experienced no less sensibly the effects of the Archduchess's interposition, during the progress of the last campaign, in a manner which must have occasioned him the deepest mortification.

tification. No perfon here doubts, that the refolution taken by the Cabinet of Vienna, not to render Saxony the feat of war, as in found policy the Auftrians ought to have done; was principally, if not wholly, due to her tears and entreaties, which the Emprefs could not behold unmoved. Perhaps Jofeph may at fome future day refent and punifh an interference, fo incompatible with his objects of ambition. I know however, from inconteftable authority, that Maria Therefa has already not only promifed, but, has fettled beyond a poffibility of its being overturned by her fucceffor, a future provifion the moft enviable for her daughter. Whether Prince Charles of Lorrain fhall furvive the Emprefs or not, the Archduchefs Chriftina and her hufband will be, on his decease, conftituted Governors of the Auftrian Low Countries for life. It has been the conftant object of their attention; and notwithftanding the Emperor's reluctance, who is fuppofed to have intended that important charge for his brother Maximilian, he has been obliged to acquiefce in, and even to ratify his mother's determination. Whatever

ever political changes may take place after the acceffion of Jofeph the Second; while his mother furvives, the Archduchefs Christina will probably continue to act no unimportant part in the fecret councils of the Imperial Cabinet.

The character of Maria Therefa appears to have partaken largely of the mutability connected with every thing human; and nothing can be more diffimilar than the fame woman in 1741, and in 1779. Many of the leading features of her mind have undergone fince that period, as complete a transformation as thofe of her perfon. Narrow prejudices and fuperftitious obfervances, obfcure in fome meafure the eminent qualities with which fhe was endowed by nature; qualities which juftly acquired her in the beginning of her reign, the admiration of all Europe. Perhaps however, we ought to pity, and almoft to conceal defects, half apologized for by her fex and age, nurfed by the bigotry of the people over whom fhe reigns, and become hereditary in the Houfe of Auftria. She retains, and I doubt not will ever continue to poffefs, many of the virtues and qualifications,

qualifications, which juſtly entitle her to rank among the beſt Princes who have ſwayed the ſceptre in modern times. As a woman, in every relation of private life, ſhe has not only been blameleſs, but meritorious. Her honor never ſuffered the ſlighteſt attaint, and ſhe was invariably, as well as tenderly, attached to the late Emperor Francis. An affectionate mother, a generous miſtreſs, and a faithful friend, her heart has not been hardened or corrupted by the poſſeſſion of power. It ſtill remains acceſſible to every gentle and benevolent impreſſion.

As little has age dried up or cloſed the channels of her liberality. She delights to give, to relieve diſtreſs, and to extend aſſiſtance to merit. At this very time, I know that the penſions and donations made from her privy purſe, do not fall ſhort of eighty thouſand pounds ſterling a-year. The indigent and the unfortunate of every deſcription, find in her bounty a certain reſource. Thoſe who judge ſeverely, incline to condemn her for too great a propenſity to munificence, and denominate it facility or profuſion. That it acquires her the affection of her ſubjects, is however

however unqueftionable. The foldiery idolize her, and would, I am perfuaded, manifeft the warmeft enthufiafm in her defence. As fhe paffes in her carriage, when at Schonbrun, fhe frequently throws handfuls of ducats to the guard. That fhe knows how to diftinguifh, and how to patronize genius or talents in every branch, the names of Van Swieten, Metaftafio, Laudohn, Gluck, and many other eminent perfons who have rifen under her protection, will beft evince. No princefs was ever more open and gracious in her manners, more eafy of accefs, or more difpofed to redrefs the complaints of her people. They feel, but they pity and draw a veil over the weakneffes of her character. Her long reign has neither been marked by oppreffion, difgraced by cruelty, nor ftained by blood. The Hungarians, who under Leopold, Jofeph the Firft, and even under Charles the Sixth, were perpetually in arms againft the Auftrian Government, are become, under Maria Therefa, the fureft fupporters of the throne.

Her talents are confeffedly good, and much above mediocrity. It is not faying enough,

enough, merely to aſſert that ſhe poſſeſſes more capacity than her father or her grandfather, both of whom were Princes of very moderate endowments. Her judgment is ſound, and ſhe is neither blindly led by her ſon, nor by her miniſters; though ſhe has ſuffered herſelf on various occaſions to be over-ruled by them, in contradiction to her own wiſhes and opinion. The preſent war may be cited as a proof of her reluctant deference to their advice; if, indeed, it may not rather be entirely and ſolely aſcribed to the Emperor's ambition, deſire to diſtinguiſh himſelf, and wiſh to avail himſelf of ſo favorble an occaſion to augment his dominions. Prince Kaunitz, though he has been near five-and-twenty years at the head of affairs, and though he deſervedly enjoys all Maria Thereſa's confidence; by no means governs her, as Prince Menzikoff governed Catharine the Firſt of Ruſſia, or as Biron, Duke of Courland, tyrannized over the Empreſs Anne. She demands, it is true, his opinion upon every point, and generally adopts it, or conforms to it; but ſhe determines for herſelf, and iſſues her orders in conſequence.

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The Emperor himſelf, her ſon, though poſſeſſing her warmeſt affection, aſſociated to a participation in the Royal Authority, and declared Co-regent of Hungary, Bohemia, and all the Auſtrian dominions, yet remains dependent on his mother. She preſerves the ſupreme direction, and is regarded as the efficient Sovereign. Even in the military department, which ſhe has in ſome meaſure reſigned to him, it may be queſtioned whether he can make any eſſential changes or regulations, without her conſent and approbation. Conſcious of poſſeſſing ability to govern, it is believed that ſhe will never commit the felicity and protection of her people, to other hands than her own. If in the evening of her reign, ſhe is become enſlaved to a womaniſh ſuperſtition, this weakneſs is obliterated by her magnanimity of mind, by the wiſdom of her adminiſtration, by the proſperity that has attended her government, and by the beneficence of her character, which has rendered her no leſs dear to her ſubjects, than reſpected by foreign nations.

# LETTER XXXI.

*Character and anecdotes of the Emperor Francis. —Princess of Auersberg.—Her beauty, and accomplishments.—Her death.—Particulars of the Emperor's death.*

VIENNA, *February* 19, 1779.

IT is not a little curious to reflect that the House of Austria, the German branch of which, during three centuries, from Frederic the Third to Charles the Sixth, uninterruptedly filled the Imperial Throne, is now sunk in the family of Lorrain. But, as if the great qualities and virtues of Maria Theresa supplied the defect in her sex, Europe still acknowledges in her person and descendants, the Austrian line. The late Emperor Francis was grandson to the celebrated Charles the Fifth, Duke of Lorrain, who lived an exile from his dominions, and who, when dying, left nothing to his children except his sword, Leopold, his son, restored to his patrimonial inhe-

inheritance of Lorrain at the peace of Ryſwick, was one of the moſt excellent and amiable princes who has appeared in modern times. The blood of Auſtria was mingled with that of Bourbon, in the veins of Francis; Charles the Fifth, his grandfather, having married an Archducheſs, and Leopold, his father, having eſpouſed a daughter of Philip, Duke of Orleans, brother of Louis the Fourteenth. At the extinction of the family of Medicis in 1737, when Lorrain was virtually incorporated with the French Monarchy, and when Don Carlos became King of Naples; Francis, in virtue of the ſtipulations made between France and Auſtria, was transferred to Tuſcany. It was then, as Voltaire juſtly obſerves, that the famous medal of Trajan, on the reverſe of which was inſcribed "Regna aſſignata," might with propriety have been renewed among modern nations. In 1745, after the death of the Bavarian Emperor Charles the Seventh, the Great Duke of Tuſcany, huſband of Maria Thereſa, was raiſed to the Imperial Dignity.

Francis, who in his perſon was very handſome, was likewiſe expert in all the exerciſes

of the body, and accounted uncommonly graceful on horfeback. His countenance was not merely pleafing, but its expreffion was benign as well as conciliating. Towards the latter part of his life he grew corpulent: yet without lofing his paffion for the chace, which he always continued to purfue with ardor. An inconteftable proof of his having been a very amiable man, is, that though a foreigner, his memory is univerfally cherifhed at Vienna. Few princes have been more generally beloved: fince among the number of perfons with whom I daily converfe, who knew and remember him, I have never heard him mentioned, except with teftimonies of lively affection and regret. His qualities were, indeed, rather fuch as ingratiate and attach, than of a nature to dazzle or impofe. He poffeffed all the characteriftic manners of the French nation, gallant, lively, polite, and fuperficial. Fond of fociety, of amufement, of drefs, and of magnificence, pleafure, accompanied him wherever he moved. Vienna, during his life, muft have been a far more elegant and luxurious capital than at prefent. An Italian opera, a

 Ballet

Ballet conducted by Noverre, comedies, and maſquerades, in perpetual ſucceſſion, while they rendered it brilliant, attracted foreigners to the Court. Joſeph the Second by no means reſembles his father in a taſte for diſſipation, expence, and the ceremonial of ſtate.

The education of the late emperor had been neglected, to a degree uncommon among perſons of his high birth, and of which it is difficult to form an adequate idea. So uninſtructed was he even in the moſt ordinary branches of knowledge, as hardly to be able to read; and his ordinary orthography would have diſgraced a ſchool-boy. This fact would be incredible, if I had not heard it from perſons who loved him, and who lived with him in the cloſeſt intimacy. "More than once," ſaid a lady to me, whom Francis diſtinguiſhed by his friendſhip, "I have ſpared his Imperial Majeſty the "humiliation of not being able to decipher "a play-bill, and have read it to him." He poſſeſſed neither a taſte for letters, nor an acquaintance with works of genius; but he had travelled over many parts of Europe, and when Duke of Lorrain, had made ſome ſtay

in England, as well as at the Court of France. Having likewiſe reſided in Italy, when great Duke of Tuſcany, and viſited various of the German Courts, he had acquired a degree of general information, from ſeeing ſo many capitals and countries. For chymical reſearches he had a decided paſſion, which he gratified by making multiplied attempts to attain the art of tranſmuting metals, or in other words, the Philoſopher's Stone. His ill ſucceſs only induced him to turn his attention to branches of ſimilar purſuit, equally chimerical and impracticable. By means of large burning mirrors he endeavoured to diſſolve diamonds, and out of many ſmall, to form one large diamond; but he found that the proceſs only converted them into cryſtal, or totally deprived them of their luſtre by calcining them to a cinder.

Francis, though not diſtinguiſhed by the talents for war which his grandfather Charles the Fifth, Duke of Lorrain, eminently poſſeſſed, was nevertheleſs conſidered as perſonally brave. During the laſt years of the Emperor Charles the Sixth, he ſerved againſt the Turks in Sclavonia and Servia,

Servia, without acquiring any military reputation. He had likewise been placed, rather nominally than in effect, at the head of the Austrian forces in 1741; but, during the whole course of the great "war of seven "years," the Empress's attachment was too warm and tender, to permit of her separation from her husband, or to allow him to hazard his person in the field. This conduct gave occasion to many sarcastic remarks, on the part of his Prussian Majesty. Accustomed himself to brave every kind of danger, and a stranger to conjugal felicity, he treated with derision the inglorious retreat of Francis, in the arms of his wife. Maria Theresa was not a little mortified, as well as irritated, by the reflections which Frederic publickly made on the nature of her affection, and on her reasons for not exposing him to the dangers and hardships of a German campaign. They served only to widen the breach between the two courts, and to mix personal animosity with political quarrels.

Neither the immense advantages derived by Francis from the Austrian alliance, which raised him to the Imperial Dignity; nor the

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presence, rank, and character of a wife who possessed so many claims to his affection; could nevertheless impose a restraint on his inclinations, or prevent his being guilty of infidelity to the marriage bed. Of a disposition ardent as well as enterprizing, in pursuits of gallantry, it was said to be dangerous for a woman of honour and beauty to remain alone in his company. He never failed, it is true, in every testimony of external deference and respect towards the Empress, with whom he lived on terms of the most cordial union: a numerous and beautiful family cemented their mutual regard: but, Francis was not the less irregular in the gratification of his passions. Towards the conclusion of his life he became constant to one person, who maintained her ascendancy over him to the last moment. I mean the Princess of Auersberg, a woman too celebrated, as well as extraordinary, not to enter into some of the particulars of her history and character.

Maria Wilhelmina de Neuperg, daughter to the celebrated Marshal Count Neuperg, so well known in the history of the reign of Charles

Charles the Sixth, and in the beginning of that of Maria Therefa, was born on the 30th of April 1738. As her father was Governor of Luxembourg, fhe, while very young, was often carried to Bruffels and to Spa; where fhe acquired, by the mixture of company and fociety found in thofe places, an eafe and elegance of manners, which the more formal, or contracted ftyle of female education in Auftria, did not then commonly beftow on women even of the higheft rank. When fcarcely fixteen, Marfhal Neuperg brought her to the Imperial Court, of which fhe immediately became the wonder and the delight. I have been unanimoufly affured by all who knew her, that no defcription can convey an adequate or juft idea of her attractions. She was of the middle fize, her complexion a clear brown, her eyes grey, her hair chefnut, luxuriant, and gloffy. But, her face and caft of countenance were of that kind, to which, it is faid, no painter could ever do juftice; becaufe, when fhe converfed, a thoufand graces lighted up in it, and gave her an

animation beyond the power of art to imitate or to convey.

So gentle and conciliating were her manners, that ſhe ſeemed incapable of offending, or intentionally giving pain. Deſtitute of affectation, ſhe never laboured to pleaſe; for Nature had done all, and ſhe had only to appear, in order to be admired and beloved. Such was her ſuperiority of perſonal beauty, as to be out of the reach of competition; and ſuch the inſinuating ſweetneſs of her addreſs, as to be irreſiſtible. She excited love in one ſex, without awakening envy or rivality in the other; and ſhe made no enemies, becauſe ſhe never attempted raillery or ridicule. Her converſation was gay, eaſy, and amuſing; but ſhe neither poſſeſſed any uncommon natural endowments of mind, nor had ſhe a very cultivated underſtanding. Prodigal from temper, careleſs of money, and loving rather to enrich her relations than herſelf, ſhe knew no bounds to her profuſion. A paſſion for play, which ſhe indulged without reſtraint after her marriage, cauſed her to loſe immenſe ſums at

the gaming table. Her heart, naturally generous and diſintereſted, was likewiſe tender and yielding. Fickle and capricious, ſhe ſeldom remained long conſtant in her preference of any lover; but, her very foibles had in them ſomething amiable; and it is ſaid to have been impoſſible to know her, without feeling attachment towards her.

So diſtinguiſhed a perſon, and ſo highly endowed by nature, could not long remain without offers and ſolicitations of the moſt flattering kind. Among her ſuitors ſhe reckoned the preſent Marſhal Lacy, as well as other noblemen of the greateſt rank and fortune. Having ſelected Prince Auerſberg, ſhe was married to him in April 1755, when ſhe had juſt completed her ſeventeenth year. The Prince her huſband, already a widower, was then about four-and-thirty. Beſides her perſonal attractions, ſhe brought him a fortune of full twelve thouſand pounds ſterling; a ſum conſidered as immenſe at Vienna, where women of the higheſt quality have rarely above ſix or eight hundred pounds for their portion. But, ſuch was

her

her rage for play, that in the courſe of the firſt ſummer after her marriage, while ſhe was at the Prince her huſband's country-ſeat, ſhe loſt this whole ſum at the gaming table; principally to her brother, Count Neuperg. She is ſaid to have loſt at cards, twelve thouſand ducats, or above five thouſand pounds ſterling, in the courſe of a ſingle evening; and her profuſion was ſimilar in other reſpects.

Only an Imperial lover, and one as generous as Francis, could long ſuffice for ſuch demands. He found little difficulty in rendering himſelf acceptable to her; his rank, his aſſiduities, and his preſents, having removed the firſt obſtacles; but, her inconſtancy excluded him from the ſole poſſeſſion of her heart. Francis was not the leſs permanently attached to her. In her ſociety, and that of a ſelect company of both ſexes, he uſed to paſs many of his evenings. A ſupper of ten or twelve covers, was provided, where the Princeſs preſided, and from which all form or etiquette were baniſhed. In public, whether at the theatre, or elſewhere, Francis obſerved

observed towards the Empreſs every mark of deference and attention; but, when ſhe was not preſent at the performance, he always repaired to the Princeſs's box. At the opera he uſually ſtood behind her, concealed from view; and the box was locked, in order to prevent intruſion. Notwithſtanding theſe precautions, a cough to which he was ſubject, generally betrayed his retreat, and divulged the ſecret to the world.

When the Imperial Court went to Inſpruck, in the ſummer of the year 1765, the Princeſs of Auerſberg did not remain behind at Vienna. But, with the deceaſe of the Emperor, which took place in the Tyrol, her conſideration likewiſe expired. It is a fact, that on the evening preceding his diſſolution, which was ſudden and unexpected, he had preſented her an order on his treaſurer, for no leſs a ſum than two hundred thouſand florins, or near twenty thouſand pounds. As he died the following day, which was Sunday, the interval was too ſhort, to allow her time for receiving the money. In a ſecret council, held after Francis's

Francis's death, it was debated whether a pecuniary donation of ſuch a nature, to ſo great an amount, ſhould or ought to be fulfilled. More than one voice declared againſt it; but Maria Thereſa, ſuperior to every conſideration except what ſhe thought her own and her huſband's honour demanded, iſſued orders punctually to diſcharge the ſum.

During the Emperor's life, ſhe had always treated the Princeſs with uncommon marks of diſtinction; a conduct only to be explained by her affection for him, which extended even to his weakneſſes, and reſpected his very faults. Such was her attachment to his memory, or the magnanimity and enlargement of her mind, that it is probable ſhe would have continued the ſame treatment after Francis was no more, if the Princeſs had not wantonly incenſed her, by a behaviour at once unbecoming and imprudent. The Empreſs's grief for the loſs of her huſband, was well known to be ſincere, as well as profound; and ſhe remained a long time ſhut up in the palace at Vienna, a prey to dejection, in the deepeſt retirement.

retirement. When ſhe re-appeared in public, the ladies of the Court were permitted to wait on her, and to pay their compliments of condolence, but with the expreſs prohibition of wearing Rouge. The Princeſs of Auerſberg alone, who ventured to diſobey the order, came to the Palace in deep mourning, but moſt elegantly dreſſed, and with a profuſion of Rouge. Maria Thereſa did not conceal her reſentment at this conduct; and when the Princeſs approached to kiſs her hand, ſhe drew back with an air of indignation and amazement that ſtruck every one preſent. So glaring a contempt of decorum on ſo melancholy an occaſion, and in ſuch a place, was never pardoned by the Empreſs, and juſtly merited reprehenſion.

She had previouſly given the Princeſs a convincing proof of her ſuperiority to little intereſts, and of her generous manner of acting in all pecuniary concerns. Francis, with a view of having the object of his attachment conſtantly near him, preſented her a ſmall farm-houſe near the palace of

Laxem-

Laxembourg, where the Court uſually paſſed a conſiderable part of the ſummer. He did not venture to give her an apartment in the palace itſelf, as it would have been too obvious a mark of diſreſpect to the Empreſs. The Princeſs had expended a conſiderable ſum of money in furniſhing and embelliſhing this cottage, which ſhe had rendered very commodious. After the Emperor's deceaſe, Maria Thereſa cauſed it to be ſignified to her, that ſhe wiſhed to purchaſe it, and therefore deſired her to fix her own price on it; meaning to take away all future pretext for her being at Laxembourg, when the Court reſided there. The Princeſs named thirty thouſand florins, or near three thouſand pounds, as the price of her cottage; a ſum far exceeding its real value: but, the Empreſs ſent it to her inſtantly, without deduction or heſitation. Even to the laſt moment, ſhe obſerved the utmoſt civility towards her, and never behaved to her with harſhneſs or inſult.

The

The Princeſs of Auerſberg ſurvived her Imperial lover more than ten years, but never had any children, either before, or after his death. It ſeems uncertain what was the preciſe nature of the diſorder which proved fatal to her, and many different accounts are related of it here. That ſhe had a contraction in her limbs, for which frictions were preſcribed, is undoubted; but, whether the uſe of them accelerated her end, as is pretended, I will not venture to ſay. Humbourg, a ſurgeon of reputation who practiſes at this time in Vienna, attended her. The frictions which were preſcribed by him, being, as it would appear, too violent for her frame, not only cauſed her extreme pain, but produced a contraction in the parts where they were applied. I had the curioſity to inquire the circumſtances of her illneſs and death, only a few days ſince, of Brambilla, another very eminent practitioner, who was called in to her aſſiſtance, at a late ſtage of her diſtemper. "When I viſited the Princeſs, ſhe had "already," ſaid he, "a contraction in one "arm,

" arm, leg, and thigh, for which frictions " were advifed. Having ufed them, they " appeared to fucceed; and fhe was fo much " amended in confequence, that fhe re- " covered in fome meafure the power of " moving her limbs. We began to enter- " tain fanguine hopes of her recovery, when " a violent inflammation on her lungs ren- " dered all medical fkill vain, and put an " end to her life." Whatever was the caufe, fhe died at Vienna, fcarcely three years and a half ago, in October 1775, before fhe had attained to the age of eight-and-thirty.

It only remains to relate the particulars of the Emperor Francis's laft feizure and death. The marriage of the prefent Great Duke of Tufcany, Leopold, with the Infanta of Spain, Maria Louifa, which was to be folemnized at Infpruck, in the fummer of 1765, carried the Imperial Court into the Tyrol. Jofeph, the prefent Emperor, then King of the Romans, as well as various of the Archdukes and Ducheffes, accompanied their Majefties thither. It is certain that Francis

Francis undertook the journey with repugnance, which ſentiment he expreſſed to various perſons before he ſet out from Vienna. The Court remained for ſeveral weeks at Inſpruck, during which time the weather happened to be ſo conſtantly rainy, that the Emperor could not take his accuſtomed exerciſe of hunting. He ſeemed to be anxious and oppreſſed in mind, without preciſely knowing the cauſe, or without any decided indiſpoſition. The Empreſs, ever attentive to the leaſt change in his health, would have perſuaded him to loſe ſome blood; but, as he had a diſlike to the operation, he always procraſtinated it; and on her urging him to ſubmit, he refuſed, adding with ſome warmth, "Madame, voulez vous que je "meurs dans la ſaignée?" He ſtill continued uneaſy, ever wiſhing to be gone from the Tyrol, where a weight conſtantly hung upon his ſpirits; and in anſwer to thoſe perſons who inquired of him how he found himſelf, he always replied, "Je me porterai bien, "quand une fois je ſerai à Vienne." More

than once, looking round on the high mountains with which Infpruck is invefted, the air of which place feemed to affect his refpiration; he exclaimed, "Ah! fi je "pourrois feulement fortir de ces mon-"tagnes du Tyrol!" All thefe facts evidently prove that Francis felt himfelf menaced with an apoplectic attack, which the air in the vallies of the Tyrol probably accelerated, by its preffure on the brain.

During the whole courfe of the day upon which he expired, he complained of a dizzinefs and fuffocation that greatly incommoded him; but, which, neverthelefs, did not prevent him from appearing at the Opera. It was on Sunday, the 18th of Auguft, 1765. Previous to fetting out, he waited on the Emprefs, in order to wifh her a good night, according to his ufual cuftom, as fhe did not accompany him to the theatre; and after the performance, he was to have fupped with the Princefs of Auerfberg and a felect party, for which repaft

repaſt all the requiſite preparations were made. I have already mentioned elſewhere that his nephew the Duke of Chablais, had repaired to Inſpruck by the Emperor's invitation, who had intentions of giving him the Archducheſs Chriſtina in marriage. During the progreſs of the Opera, Francis found himſelf much indiſpoſed; and in order to diminiſh the difficulty of breathing, he took ſome drops, though without any conſiderable effect. The Princeſs of Auerſberg was in her private box, to which the Emperor was accuſtomed frequently to repair, when not accompanied by the Empreſs. But, the Duke of Chablais's preſence impoſing a reſtraint on him, prevented his gratifying that inclination. He contented himſelf, therefore, with making ſigns to the Princeſs, that he was unwell, by pointing to his head; and as ſhe was ſeated oppoſite, ſhe plainly perceived his indiſpoſition, which became more violent every minute.

Unwilling to quit the theatre, or to interrupt the performance, he remained, neverthe-

 leſs,

leſs, ſome time longer in the box; till finding himſelf menaced with a total loſs of ſenſe, he roſe up and went out, followed only by the Baron de Reiſchach and one or two other noblemen. When the Emperor came into the air, he ſeemed to ſtagger; but, on being aſked by one of his attendants, whether he was ill, he ſaid in German, "A man of "ſpirit is not affected by a ſmall matter." Theſe were the laſt words that he ever pronounced. He ſtill attempted however to proceed, in hopes of reaching his own apartment, to attain which he was obliged to deſcend a flight of wooden ſteps. Coming to the top, his head grew ſo diſordered that he laid hold on the ſentinel's arm who ſtood there on guard, with a view to prevent himſelf from falling; and as he tried to advance, at the ſecond or third ſtep he fell forwards. The perſons who were about him, inſtantly carried him to a little antichamber adjoining, where they laid him on a common pallet bed, belonging to one of the lacqueys of the Court. While meſſengers

gers were ſent for medical aid, the King of the Romans was called out from the Opera. Hurrying to the room, he took his father in his arms, and manifeſted the deepeſt affliction. The Emperor's veins, meanwhile, were cut, his temples ſcarified, and every method uſed to recover him, but in vain. He gave no ſign of ſenſe, and little indication of life, his tongue hanging out of his mouth. It was ſoon perceived that he was dead, and the phyſicians pronounced that all further efforts were to no purpoſe.

Meanwhile, as the intelligence ſpread through the palace, it became neceſſary to announce the event to the Empreſs. She received it with marks of the acuteſt diſtreſs, which were heightened by the apprehenſions that her deceaſed huſband had been taken away unprepared, in the midſt of his pleaſures, and before he had made his peace with Heaven by prayer or confeſſion. A council was inſtantly held, at which it was reſolved that her Majeſty ſhould quit Inſpruck, as ſoon as the requiſite preparations could be made for her departure. In order

to avoid all ſpectators, and as the moſt private mode of conveyance, a boat was fitted up for her reception, into which ſhe went on the enſuing day, only accompanied by her ſon the preſent Emperor, Count Dietrichſtein Maſter of the Horſe, and one Lady of the Bed-chamber. They deſcended the river Inn to its confluence with the Danube, and thence down that ſtream to Vienna.

Inſpruck was preſently abandoned by all the Courtiers, and the roads in every direction were covered with horſes and carriages. In two or three days after the Emperor's death, hardly a perſon was to be ſeen in the ſtreets of a place, which had been ſo lately the ſeat of amuſements, crowded with the firſt Nobility of Auſtria and Italy. Every one, occupied with their own concerns, quitted the corpſe of the deceaſed Prince. But a circumſtance almoſt incredible, and which I ſhould ſcarcely venture to relate, if I had not received it from high authority, I muſt ſubjoin. Count Hatzfeldt, who is miniſter of ſtate for the interior, a nobleman equally

respectable for his talents and his public services; assured me himself, that he entered the chamber where his Imperial Majesty lay dead, in less than two hours after he expired. To the Count's astonishment, he found the corpse stretched on the wretched pallet bed, where they had placed him, absolutely alone, not even an attendant near him; while two or three lingering drops of blood were still oozing from the orifice which the surgeons had opened. Perhaps however, this fact ought not to surprize; history is full of similar examples.

# LETTER XXXII.

*State of the public mind at Vienna.—Arrival of the preliminaries of peace.—Satisfaction of the Court.—Entrance of the King of Prussia into Bohemia.—Disgust of the Austrian army to the continuance of the war.*

VIENNA, *February* 25, 1779.

THE present month has been passed in perpetual vicissitudes of fear and hope, as the prospect of war or peace alternately assumed a more probable appearance. Even up to the actual moment, nothing decisive is known, though every day and hour may now unfold whether Germany is destined to be the theatre of another campaign; or whether the House of Austria will make such concessions of territory, as may satisfy the jealousy of Frederic and his Allies. In the last days of January, Mellendorf, one of the Prussian Generals, unexpectedly entered Bohemia, and advanced to the little

town

town of Brix, which he pillaged. On his retreat towards the confines of Saxony, he was attacked by a body of Auſtrians, from whom he took two pieces of cannon and ſome priſoners, after which he continued his march out of Bohemia. Theſe partial incurſions increaſe the calamities, without deciding the ſate, or accelerating the concluſion of the war. On the part of his Pruſſian Majeſty, they are probably intended only to keep alive the ardour of his troops, and to habituate them, after ſixteen years of repoſe, to the fatigues of a winter campaign. They may likewiſe conduce to obliterate the recent diſgrace of Habelſchwert, which had unqueſtionably ſtained the luſtre of his arms, while it elevated proportionably the Auſtrian courage and reputation.

Juſt before the cloſe of a Carnival, that has been by no means cheerful, arrived on the thirteenth of this month, a courier from Prince Repnin, the Ruſſian Miniſter at Breſlau. His diſpatches, inſtead of being addreſſed

addreſſed to any member of the adminiſtration here, were directed to the Baron de Breteuil, the French Embaſſador; who appears, though faintly, to aſſume the ſame character of a mediator on the part of Auſtria, which Prince Repnin, by order of his Court, avowedly occupies for Pruſſia. It was inſtantly reported that the meſſenger had brought the preliminaries of a general pacification; a piece of intelligence which excited the ſtrongeſt ſenſations throughout this capital. When the Baron de Breteuil arrived at Prince Kaunitz's with the news, though it was near eight o'clock in the evening, an hour at which the Empreſs is already preparing to go to reſt; the Prime Miniſter immediately repaired to the palace, to communicate to her the welcome information. We are ignorant of the particulars of their interview and converſation; but, no one doubts the joy of Maria Thereſa, at the proſpect of ſeeing a ſpeedy concluſion put to the war. She no longer conceals her apprehenſions of its inglorious,

glorious, if not injurious consequences to the House of Austria; and she probably anticipates the necessity of restoring the portion of Bavaria occupied by her troops. In the bitterness of her emotions, some days ago, she exclaimed, after perusing a letter transmitted her by Prince Kaunitz, "I perceive that I have neither an individual in the German Empire, nor an ally in Europe, who will aid my cause." Domestic vexations increase her political chagrin. Not only the Great Duchess of Tuscany is at present confined by illness to her chamber; but, the Archduke Maximilian, the Empress's youngest son, one of the most amiable and worthy Princes in the world, has been obliged to have recourse to the baths of Baden, four leagues distant from Vienna, for the recovery of his health. The fatigues of the late campaign, on which he accompanied his brother the Emperor, are supposed to have been too severe for his strength, and to have given a rude shock to his constitution.

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Even Joſeph himſelf, if we may truſt to appearances, is heartily tired of his new military profeſſion, and ſcarcely leſs deſirous of peace than his mother. He has found the ſcience of tactics, and the command of armies, more difficult than he had apprehended. Counteracted in the cabinet, and diſliked in the camp; after a campaign no way fertile in laurels, he finds neither his fame, nor his popularity increaſed. He feels doubtleſs, likewiſe, that the general voice of Europe is againſt him; that not only the King of Pruſſia, but the German Princes are preparing to check his ambitious enterprizes; and that the acceſſion of territory acquired from the ſeizure of Lower Bavaria, even if finally retained, may be dearly purchaſed by incurring univerſal condemnation. His conduct, and every circumſtance of his behaviour, ſince the arrival of Prince Repnin's courier, manifeſt a ſatisfaction, which he has not attempted to diſguiſe, or affected to conceal. After having been withdrawn from ſociety during the whole Carnival, and rarely appearing either

either in public, or in private company, he has at length ſhewn himſelf again to his ſubjects. On the three days that immediately followed the reception of the late news, his Imperial Majeſty was preſent each evening at the Ridottos. With a ſmiling countenance, he accoſted every one whom he knew, entered familiarly into converſation, and ſeemed deſirous of perſuading all who ſaw him, that he ſincerely participates in the wiſh for peace which animates the Empreſs, and pervades the Cabinet. The Carnival finiſhed under theſe flattering ſymptoms of returning tranquillity.

So ſatisfactory were the articles brought by Prince Repnin's Courier from Breſlau, as the baſis of a definitive treaty, conſidered by the Court; and ſo thoroughly were the Auſtrian Miniſters convinced of the probability of its ſpeedy accompliſhment, that they relaxed in many eſſential preparations for the approaching campaign. The war was indeed generally regarded as at an end. The contract for mules was not only ſtopt, but even the tranſportation

transportation of cannon from the arsenal was suspended. Vienna, during five or six days, enjoyed a delusive calm, which was suddenly interrupted by a report, that Frederic having privately quitted Breslau, was arrived at Schweidnitz. Instantly all the public offices were in motion, and consternation succeeded to security. Not an instant was lost in sending off Generals Nostitz and Richecour to join the army in Bohemia. Prince Charles Lichtenstein's baggage followed, and every thing indicated immediate hostilities. The alarm was not by any means false, or even exaggerated; and the intelligence of the entrance of the King of Prussia in person into Bohemia, at the head of twelve thousand troops, which arrived next day, sufficiently proved that he did not trust solely to the mediation of Catharine, however sincere or efficacious, for producing peace.

An irruption so unexpected, at this inclement season, has roused the Imperial Cabinet from their premature security. They begin to

perceive

perceive that the weight of near ſeventy years, added to numerous infirmities, have not yet ſubdued the ſpirit of Frederic, nor prevented him from leading his forces as in former wars. We know that he has already reached Braunau, while the Auſtrians, unprepared to oppoſe him, fall back in every direction. Vienna offers at the preſent moment, a curious mixture of contradictory appearances, and contending emotions. The people, indignant at the idea of a peace which is about to be ſigned, at the time when a Pruſſian army is ravaging Bohemia; exclaim againſt ſuch humiliation, as no leſs degrading to the national character and arms, than unbecoming the Majeſty of the Throne. The upper orders are divided in opinion; ſome loudly reprobating a continuation of the war, while others as warmly inſiſt on the neceſſity of its vigorous proſecution. But, only one ſentiment pervades the military department; diſguſt and averſion to further hoſtilities. Actuated in a peculiar manner by theſe feelings, Marſhal Laudohn,

Laudohn, to whom the Emperor, only two days ſince, offered the command of the forces in Bohemia, declined it; on pretence of indiſpoſition. His infirmities of body and mind incapacitated him, as he aſſured his Majeſty, for ſo important a ſtation. Joſeph, equally aſtoniſhed and chagrined at the refuſal, aſked him, whether he would not accompany him at leaſt into the field? Laudohn replied, that as to his perſon, it was abſolutely at his Majeſty's diſpoſal. He has not forgotten the affair of Munchengratz, where Joſeph, by his interference, ſnatched from him a certain victory over Prince Henry of Pruſſia, nor will he be eaſily induced to ſubject himſelf to a repetition of ſuch diſgrace.

Meanwhile the negociations for peace are not diſcontinued, though the utmoſt uncertainty reſpecting their termination ſtill prevails here. The Pruſſians are now ſaid to be retiring from Braunau and Trautenau; but, reports that they are aſſembling in the vicinity of Egra, on the weſtern frontier of Bohemia,

Bohemia, have ſpread new alarm through this capital. A ſhort time muſt decide the queſtion of peace or war. While that great event hangs in ſuſpenſe, let us take a ſurvey of the characters of his Imperial Majeſty, and of the Auſtrian prime Miniſter.

# LETTER XXXIII.

*Joseph the Second.—His Education.—Partiality of the Emperor and Empress for the Archduke Charles.—Marriage of Joseph with the Infanta of Parma.—Particulars of that Princess's character, illness, and death.—Indecision of the Imperial Court on the choice of another Princess.—Second marriage of Joseph.—Qualities and death of the Empress Maria Josepha of Bavaria.—Attachments of the Emperor.—Manner of passing his time.—His person, manners, and accomplishments.—Indifference for the Arts.—Association to the royal authority.—Regulations and measures of Joseph.—Particulars of his private life and character.—Interview of Neiss.—Interview of Neustadt.—Anecdotes of Joseph.—His love of travel.—Activity.—Economy.—Courage.—Passion for war.—Ambition.*

VIENNA, *March* 4, 1779.

JOSEPH the Second was born on the 13th of March, 1741, at a most critical period of his mother's reign; a few months after the

the deceafe of her father, Charles the Sixth, when fhe was reduced to fly from Vienna to the Hungarians, for fhelter and protection. He was committed to the care of the Marfhal Prince Battiani, while ftill a child; but at that time, and even long afterwards, he gave few or no indications of an active and fuperior mind. Extreme timidity, accompanied with awkwardnefs and embarraffment, characterized his manners. Referved in his deportment, and maintefting neither military ardor, nor aptitude for bufinefs, he was confidered as incapable of ever conducting public affairs. So convinced was the Emprefs Queen of her eldeft fon's being deficient in talents, that when alone with thofe in whom fhe repofed a confidence, fhe frequently complained of the unjuft caprice of Fortune; who deftined the Throne to a Prince deftitute of ability, while a youth adorned with every quality requifite for governing mankind, was excluded from power. In making this remark, fhe alluded to the Arch-

 duke

duke Charles, her ſecond ſon, for whom ſhe had conceived the ſtrongeſt predilection. Equally prepoſſeſſed againſt Joſeph, ſhe hardly enquired of the maſters to whom his education was committed, what progreſs he made in his ſtudies. It was not till after his brother's deceaſe, that he began to be known and conſidered, either by his parents or by the Court.

Towards the concluſion of the late war, in 1761, when he was about twenty years old, Joſeph made an attempt to emancipate and diſtinguiſh himſelf, by demanding permiſſion of his parents to ſerve againſt the Pruſſians. This firſt diſplay of energy in the Archduke was nevertheleſs overruled, and his requeſt was rejected; not ſo much on account of any apprehenſions entertained relative to his perſonal ſafety, as from a wiſh to repreſs his ardor, and to retain him ſtill in obſcurity. Though Francis, no leſs than the Empreſs, treated him with ſuch alienation, or ſeverity, Joſeph ſubmitted in ſilence; uttered no complaint, concealed his very wiſhes, and endeavoured carefully to avoid any ſubject of competition which might

might awaken his father's jealoufy. But Marfhal Battiani, his Governor, who knew him well, and who had ftudied his character, made no fcruple of declaring to his own particular friends, that "the Archduke "was not what he feemed; that thofe who "judged of him by appearances, would be "ultimately miftaken: and that his real dif-"pofition, as well as his capacity, never "would be unfolded to the world, till after "the Emperor his father's death." Time has already proved the truth of this prediction.

It is inconteftable that Francis, throughout the whole courfe of his life, did not manifeft any warm attachment for his eldeft fon. All his partiality, like Maria Therefa's, was referved for the Archduke Charles; a Prince, who is univerfally allowed to have poffeffed very extraordinary endowments. He was born in February 1745, and expired at Vienna in 1761, when he had fcarcely completed his fixteenth year. While they were children, his elder brother Jofeph and he never lived in amity; and as

they advanced towards manhood, the alienation between them, fomented by many causes, naturally increased. Charles, if incensed, did not scruple sometimes to say, that "he had the advantage in birth, "Joseph being only son to the *Great Duke* "*of Tuscany*, while he himself was the son "of *the Emperor*." The assertion was nevertheless not quite accurate, since Francis was only elected to the Imperial dignity, and crowned at Frankfort, in September 1745, seven months subsequent to the Archduke Charles's birth.

By the concurring testimony of all who remember him, he appears to have been a youth of uncommon, and almost premature talents; bold, lively, and enterprizing beyond his years. But his temper was irascible, and his disposition mischievous, as well as intractable. Such an union of ability and of violence, fanned by parental partiality, might, it was apprehended, have produced unpleasant, if not dangerous consequences, from the animosity that subsisted between

 him

him and his brother Joſeph, if Charles had attained to riper years. He was himſelf ſo ſenſible of the diſturbances likely to ariſe in the Imperial Family from this cauſe, that in his laſt hours he avowed it to the Empreſs his mother. When he lay dying, and ſhe ſat by him on the bed, diſſolved in tears, he ſaid to her, taking her hand in his, "Madam, do not lament ſo bitterly my "approaching end; for had I lived, I "ſhould have given you much greater "cauſe of ſorrow." He expired a few hours afterwards, meeting the approaches of death with the utmoſt firmneſs and courage.

Some months previous to this event, the Archduke Joſeph, then in his twentieth year, was married in October 1760, to Elizabeth Maria, Infanta of Parma. She was daughter of Don Philip, Duke of Parma; who was the younger ſon of Philip the Fifth, King of Spain: and as her mother, a Princeſs of France, was the eldeſt of Louis the Fifteenth's children, the Infanta conſequently deſcended on both ſides from the

 Houſe

Houſe of Bourbon. Her father, Don Philip, one of the moſt worthy and amiable Princes of our time, is ſaid to have periſhed by a death equally tragical and ſingular. I have been aſſured from high authority, that while hunting in the woods of Colorno, near Parma, in July 1765, he was miſſed by his attendants, and that when they found him, he was already half devoured by his own hounds; only ſome mutilated remains of his body being diſcovered. It is ſuppoſed that having been thrown from his horſe, the dogs might have taſted of his blood, and afterwards have fallen upon him, as he lay ſtunned or inſenſible on the ground. I am nevertheleſs far from venturing abſolutely to guarantee a ſtory, which ſeems to partake too much of the marvellous eaſily to challenge belief; and which is denied at Parma, where Don Philip's death is attributed to the ſmall-pox. His daughter's hiſtory contains, however, circumſtances ſcarcely leſs extraordinary, which ſtand upon ſuch teſtimony as it is difficult to controvert, or to call in queſtion.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Maria of Parma, who was born in the ſame year with her huſband, the Archduke Joſeph, though agreeable in her perſon, poſſeſſed no pretenſions to be termed beautiful. She had the deep complexion of a Spaniard, which was contraſted to her diſadvantage at Vienna, by a compariſon with the fair and delicate ſkins of the Archducheſſes her ſiſters-in-law, ſome of whom might then rank with the moſt lovely young women in Europe. Her mouth was pretty, her teeth fine, and her eyes animated; but when ſhe was ſilent or thoughtful, as frequently happened, her countenance loſt all its attractions. I have ſeen many portraits of her; in particular two, which are at the Caſtle of Preſburg in Hungary, both of them painted by the Archducheſs Chriſtina, and probably may be eſteemed flattering reſemblances. They exactly correſpond to the foregoing deſcription, and convey the idea of a dark Spaniſh woman, with a long contour of face, and black ſparkling eyes.*

Her underſtanding was cultivated, and her mind highly accompliſhed. She painted, and

and performed on many instruments of music, particularly on the violin, in a masterly manner; her active temper impelling her continually to some new pursuit or employment. Above all, she possessed the talent of interesting and amusing the Archduke her husband, when alone. But her talents and accomplishments were alike obscured by a settled melancholy, which, whether purely constitutional, or the result of other causes, became so habitual and inveterate, as to absorb, in some measure, all the other features of her character. No pleasures, and no endeavours on the part of those about her, could ever surmount this gloom, which, far from diminishing, appeared to acquire force from time. In every part of her story there is something enigmatical and mysterious, not easy to penetrate, which powerfully interests, while it awakens curiosity.

I have been assured that when the noblemen, who were commissioned by the Court of Vienna to demand her in marriage for the Archduke Joseph, arrived at Parma, and were presented to her, she addressed herself

herſelf to them with great earneſtneſs: "I am," ſaid ſhe, "exceedingly flattered "by ſo diſtinguiſhed a preference over "the other Princeſſes of Europe, as their "Imperial Majeſties have ſhewn, in chuſ-"ing me for the wife of their eldeſt ſon; "an alliance as much above my merits, "as beyond my expectations. I have "only to regret, that the trouble which "they have given themſelves will be en-"tirely ineffectual, ſince I am well con-"vinced that I ſhall not live long enough "to anſwer the views deſigned by my "marriage." Whether this ſtory be literally true or not, there is no doubt that from the day of her quitting Parma, to that of her death, ſhe conſtantly perſevered in believing and aſſerting that her life would be ſhort. Piety, as well as love, were ſuppoſed to be the cauſes of ſo extraordinary a perſuaſion. Her diſpoſition, naturally penſive and religious, was capable of deep impreſſions, and of ſtrong attachments. A report prevailed, to which ſome

ſome degree of probability is due, that ſhe had diſpoſed of her heart and affections, before ſhe quitted Italy. It is certain that ſhe expreſſed her wiſhes to have been permitted to take the veil, and to retire into a nunnery; a requeſt which added force to the former ſuſpicion.

On her firſt arrival at Vienna, ſhe was received by the Emperor and Empreſs, with every demonſtration of joy and pleaſure. The marriage was ſolemnized, and ſhe ſoon acquired an intereſt in the affections of the Archduke her huſband, of which he gave her the ſtrongeſt proofs. Whenever ſhe went to the theatre, or appeared elſewhere in public, he rarely failed to accompany her, uſually carried her cloak on his arm, and manifeſted in all his actions, the part which he took in her felicity. This conduct excited the greater ſurprize, as he had univerſally been accuſed of inſenſibility towards women; and thoſe who thought they knew his character beſt, pronounced him incapable, or unfit, for a ſtate of matrimonial happineſs. She behaved

behaved on her part towards him with great external attention, though it is supposed that her heart remained untouched and unaffected by the testimonies of his passion. While she was compelled to appear in public, or in society, she indeed endeavoured to assume a degree of cheerfulness; but no sooner was she retired to her own apartment, than she sunk into melancholy and dejection. As her favorite topic of meditation and conversation, was death, she anxiously seized every occasion of being alone, and of indulging without restraint her reflexions on this subject.

The Archduchess's pregnancy, which took place in 1761, was a natural subject of joy to the Imperial Family. She lay in of a daughter, who was named Theresa after the Empress Queen, and of whom she herself was passionately fond. But neither the feelings of a mother, the attachment manifested by her husband, nor the prospect of her own elevation to the highest dignity of the German Empire, could dissipate her habitual melancholy. With unconcern and indif-

indifference, ſhe heard of the meaſures taken to ſecure the Archduke Joſeph's election as King of the Romans; and ſhe ſeemed to feel no intereſt in his approaching coronation at Frankfort. "Theſe things," ſaid ſhe frequently, "regard not me. I ſhall "never live to be Queen of the Romans." Far from concealing her opinion on a point ſo delicate, ſhe made no ſcruple of declaring it to the Empreſs, to her ſiſters-in-law the Archducheſſes, and to the Ladies in attendance about her perſon. However ſtrange or incredible the fact may appear, it is incontrovertible. Many women of the higheſt rank, and moſt unimpeached veracity in Vienna, aſſure me that they have heard the Archducheſs frequently predict her own diſſolution as imminent. The Empreſs Queen herſelf made no ſecret of it at the time, and has confirmed with her own lips, the truth of the anecdote here related, within theſe few months paſt.

"More than once," ſaid a lady to me lately, when converſing on the ſubject, "I have

" I have attempted to oppofe ridicule, as " well as reafon, to the Archduchefs's pre- " poffeffion: but fhe remained immove- " able, and always perfifted that fhe fhould " die foon. One day as fhe held this lan- " guage, I faid to her, ' Eft il donc poffible " que votre Alteffè oublie qu'elle a une " fille qu'elle aime tendrèment? Et peut " elle la quitter avec tant de fang froid et " d'indifference?'—' Vous croyez donc,' " anfwered the Princefs, ' que je vous laif- " ferai *mon jeune?*' which was the appella- " tion by which fhe always called her " daughter. ' Oh! ma foi, non! vous ne " la garderez tout au plus, que fix ou fept " ans." This reply will appear the more extraordinary, when I add, that the child died at the age of about feven years, and confequently that her mother's prediction was literally accomplifhed.

In the fummer of the year 1763, fhe was a fecond time declared to be pregnant; but, as fhe advanced towards the term of her deli- very, her firm perfuafion that her death ap- proached,

proached, acquired new force. She was, notwithstanding, to all appearance, in a ſtate of perfect health. The Archducheſs Chriſtina, ſince married to Prince Albert of Saxony, enjoyed a diſtinguiſhed place in her affection and friendſhip. To her the Archducheſs Joſeph not only declared that ſhe ſhould die before the end of the year, but ſhe laid her a bett of it. The circumſtance was public, and generally known at the time. Returning in the autumn to Vienna from the palace of Laxembourg, where the Court had paſſed the ſummer; when the carriage reached the ſummit of the hill from whence the city is diſcovered, ſhe was ſeized with a ſhivering, and exclaimed that ſhe was about to die.

The month of November, nevertheleſs, arrived, without any apparent ſymptoms to juſtify her prediction, or rather prepoſſeſſion; but ſhe invariably perſiſted in it. On the eighteenth, at night, as ſhe was ſitting in her own apartment, an alarum clock which ſtood there, ſtruck ſeveral times after it ought re-

gularly

to have ceaſed. This accident, probably cauſed by ſome diſorder in the ſprings or mechaniſm of the machine, appeared to the Archducheſs to be ſupernatural. She turned pale, and on the ladies who were with her inquiring the cauſe of the alteration in her countenance; "It is the ſignal," ſaid ſhe, "that calls me away," pointing to the clock. She continued notwithſtanding, in health till the following day, the nineteenth of November, which was the anniverſary of her birth, when ſhe had completed her twenty-ſecond year. In the morning the Archducheſs Chriſtina rallied her on her abſurd apprehenſions, for which no viſible cauſe was to be perceived or aſſigned. Except the inconvenience and indiſpoſition neceſſarily attached to her advanced ſtate of pregnancy, ſhe appeared to have no bodily complaint.

Towards the evening of that day, as ſhe was walking acroſs her chamber, ſhe ſuddenly fell, or rather ſunk down on her knees. Her attendants immediately laid her on a couch, and ſent for medical aſſiſtance. A

fever ſhewed itſelf, and ſhortly afterwards the ſmall-pox appeared. She became delirious in the courſe of the diſorder; during which time, in the incoherence of inſanity, ſhe uttered a thouſand wild expreſſions. As ſhe called on many perſons by name, whom ſhe imagined ſhe ſaw about her bed; it was ſuppoſed by ſuch as attributed her dejection to love, that ſhe fancied ſhe beheld the object of her firſt paſſion, the Italian lover, who had always reigned in her affections. For ſome days before ſhe died, no hopes of her recovery were entertained, and ſhe expired on the 27th of November 1763, after ſtruggling with her malady about a week. The Archduke her huſband, who had attended her through every ſtage of the diſtemper, ſcarcely quitted her bedſide till ſhe breathed her laſt. Sinking under exceſs of grief, added to the fatigue which he had undergone, his attendants were obliged to carry him away by force from ſo affecting a ſcene. Joſeph was long inconſolable for her loſs, and ſtill retains the warmeſt attachment to her memory. He loves to talk of her, to

dwell on her praiſes, and to ſhew her pic-ture, which he wears in the caſe of his watch, and which I have myſelf ſeen. The young Archducheſs Thereſa, according to her mother's prediction, died, as I have already mentioned, ſoon after ſhe had completed her ſeventh year, in January 1770; a circumſtance which naturally renewed his ſorrow.

After ſo minute a recital of the pretended circumſtances that preceded and accompanied the death of the Emperor's firſt wife, I feel it indiſpenſable to ſubjoin my opinion of the degree of credit due to them. Certainly, if human teſtimony can prove any fact out of the ordinary courſe of nature, there is the ſtrongeſt imaginable to be obtained in favour of the Archducheſs's predictions; namely, that of the Empreſs Queen herſelf, of her daughters, of half the ladies of the Court of Vienna, and of many other moſt reſpectable individuals. It ſeems difficult to ſuppoſe, or to aſſign an adequate reaſon, why they ſhould deceive themſelves, or impoſe upon others. But we muſt make great allowance for Auſtrian credulity and

 ſuper-

ſuperſtition. It is likewiſe to be remembered, that the Princeſs of Parma, from whatever cauſe, was unqueſtionably a woman of a nervous, melancholy habit, who always imagined that ſhe ſaw death before her diſtempered fancy. When under the influence of low ſpirits, ſhe ſaid that ſhe ſhould not live long, and that her child would not ſurvive her many years. If the events thus foretold, had not happened, they would have been ridiculed and forgotten. But, their accidental accompliſhment gives them celebrity; and when we add beſides, the love of the marvellous, ſo common in human nature, we ſhall not find any thing very extraordinary or incredible, in the anecdotes above related.

Scarcely more than four months after the deceaſe of his wife, in April 1764, the Archduke Joſeph was elected and crowned King of the Romans; an event which ſerved equally to occupy the Imperial Court, and to diſſipate its gloom. But, he was not eaſily induced to think of a ſecond marriage, for every propoſition of which nature he

expreſſed the ſtrongeſt repugnance. Wearied by the importunities of his father the Emperor, more than induced by his mother's entreaties, and being himſelf deſirous of male iſſue, he reluctantly conſented at length, to gratify their wiſhes. A conſiderable degree of embarraſſment and uncertainty occurred, nevertheleſs, in the choice of a perſon to ſupply the place of the deceaſed Archduceſs. There were many parties in the Court, and each had a favorite object of ſelection. Elizabeth of Brunſwic, who was ſince married to the Prince Royal of Pruſſia, certainly nouriſhed hopes or expectations of marrying the King of the Romans. She was mentioned to the Empreſs Queen, but, for whatever reaſon, the application failed of effect. The Princeſs Donna Benedicta of Portugal, youngeſt daughter of the late King Joſeph the firſt, had very nearly been choſen for the Archduke. She was at that time juſt nineteen, beautiful in her perſon, and in all reſpects an eligible alliance. Some overtures, not amounting to a formal demand, were made

on the subject to the Court of Lisbon, which were favorably received. The Countess Tarocca, one of the late Emperor's most intimate friends and confidents, warmly recommended and supported the Portuguese Princess. Count Dietrichstein, Master of the Horse, enforced Madame de Tarocca's recommendation, and offered to go in person for her to Lisbon. But, Francis, informed that from her figure she did not seem likely to produce children, rejected the alliance; a circumstance justly regretted in the sequel by himself, and by every one else.

After long indecision, the choice seemed, from necessity rather than inclination, to lie between two Princesses, Maria Josepha of Bavaria, and Maria Cunegonda of Saxony. The latter, who was youngest daughter of Augustus the Third, King of Poland, appeared for some time likely to obtain the preference. Her interests were strongly sustained by the Archduchess Christina, who being herself attached to Prince Albert of Saxony, naturally desired to cement by

every

every means the connexion with that family and country, as calculated eventually to facilitate her own wishes and objects. The Princess Cunegonda was born in November 1740, only four months before the King of the Romans. She had not indeed the pretensions to personal beauty, with which Voltaire has decorated her namesake, the daughter of the Baron de Thunder-ten-Tronck, in "Candide." But, neither was her Bavarian rival more favored by nature in that respect. Joseph consented to see her, in order to form an opinon, and subsequently consult his own inclinations. In the summer of the year 1764, it was contrived that they should meet, as if by accident, at a little hunting party, not far from the baths of Toplitz, in Bohemia, near the Saxon frontiers. Thither the Princess Cunegonda repairing on horseback, was met by the King of the Romans. Their interview was short, but decisive; Joseph having declined any further efforts to obtain her hand. As some sort of recompence

 for

for so mortifying a rejection, the Court of Vienna has since interested itself in procuring her election as coadjutrix to the abbies of Essen and Thorn, about three years ago. It is curious to consider the wide interval between the lot of an Abbess and that of an Empress; between the obscure direction of a female convent, in a sequestered part of Germany, and the lustre of the Imperial Crown. But, the Saxon Princess has probably had reason to rejoice in an exclusion, which leaves her at least liberty, independence, and competence; while the unfortunate Bavarian, selected in her place, presented to the world a spectacle of the highest rank, united with the greatest misery.

Maria Josepha of Bavaria was two years older than her intended husband, having been born in March, 1739. Daughter to Charles the Seventh, Emperor of Germany, Maria Theresa's inveterate enemy and competitor at the commencement of her reign; she seemed to be precluded by her birth and connexions,

connexions, from ſo cloſe an alliance with the Houſe of Auſtria. But, theſe antient hereditary animoſities were overlooked from reaſons of convenience, or obliterated by motives of ſtate. Some vague expectations and claims upon the Bavarian ſucceſſion, founded on the poſſible extinction of the then reigning line, in the perſon of the Elector Maximilian Joſeph, brother to the Princeſs; conduced likewiſe, as is believed, to determine the choice in her favour. The event then foreſeen, having ſince taken place, has given riſe to the war which actually ſubſiſts between Auſtria and Pruſſia. While the marriage was ſtill undetermined, the Empreſs Queen, deſirous of hearing the private ſentiments entertained by thoſe about her, relative to the perſons of the two Princeſſes, Saxon and Bavarian, took occaſion to conſult a Nobleman of the Court on the ſubject; requeſting him to inform her candidly, which of them he would prefer, if it was his own caſe. As he had ſeen them both, and was a profeſſed admirer of female charms,

charms, no man could be more able to form a judgment. But, though he was accuſtomed to converſe with her Majeſty in the moſt unreſerved manner, and to ſpeak very freely to her on almoſt every topic; he felt the queſtion to be peculiarly delicate, and therefore wiſhed to decline giving either his opinion or advice. Maria Thereſa preſſing him nevertheleſs to ſpeak his ſentiments, and aſſuring him that he could not offend her by any remarks or obſervations, however ſevere, "Je vous avoue "donc, Madame, anſwered he, que ſi j'etois "le maitre de mes actions, je ne voudrois ni "l'une ni l'autre de ces Princeſſes: mais, le "couteau au goſier, et devant abſolument en "prendre une, je choiſirois plutôt la Bava-"roiſe, parceque au moins a t'elle de gorge." The Empreſs, far from being prudiſh, or affecting any gravity on the occaſion, laughed heartily at the reaſon aſſigned for his preference, which ſhe admitted to be excellent, and by no means devoid of foundation. The Nobleman to whom I allude, related to me himſelf, this anecdote.

On

On the fifteenth of January 1765, the Princeſs Maria Joſepha having arrived at Vienna from Munich, the marriage ceremony was immediately performed, without even allowing her previouſly to change her dreſs, which was a riding habit. I am aſſured by ladies who were preſent at the nuptials, that ſhe was at that time by no means an object of diſtaſte or averſion; though ſhe poſſeſſed neither the elegance of manners, nor the accompliſhments of her predeceſſor, the Infanta of Parma. Her huſband himſelf, as far as external appearances indicated, ſeemed to be not diſſatisfied with her; and it was hoped that the pleaſing or conciliating qualities of her mind and diſpoſition, might compenſate for the want of perſonal attractions. Even her enemies admit that ſhe was amiable, obliging, affable to all, and diſpoſed to every kind or benevolent ſentiment; but, her underſtanding was narrow, as well as deficient in cultivation. Humble and reſpectful to a degree of obſequiouſneſs in her behaviour towards Joſeph, whom ſhe loved

with

with ardor, ſhe vainly tried by every means to acquire ſome intereſt in his affections. Her careſſes and her fondneſs only tended ſtill more to alienate from her his heart.

I do not conſider myſelf at liberty to divulge all that I may know, or may have heard, relative to the perſon of the unfortunate Princeſs in queſtion; nor, from the peculiarity of the ſubject, could ſuch a diſcloſure be made without wounding decorum. It is certain that ſhe had natural defects, which prevented the accompliſhment of the great object of the alliance; namely, her producing children. Theſe defects, from their very nature, could not, or ought not, to have been unknown to the Elector of Bavaria her brother; and it was perhaps no leſs injudicious, than it was in fact diſhonorable, not to have declared them previous to the treaty of marriage. By the confeſſion of the King of the Romans himſelf, the nuptials were ſcarcely conſummated, though ſhe was once believed to be with child; and on that account, or under that pretext, when the reſt of the

Imperial

Imperial Family went into the Tyrol, in the summer of the year 1765, she remained behind at Vienna. But, all expectation of issue from this inauspicious union having soon vanished, Joseph even ceased to cohabit with her, and expressed towards her only disgust. The recollection of his first wife, naturally increased his dislike to the second, of which he made no secret to those with whom he lived on terms of intimacy. As if to complete the misfortune of the Queen of the Romans, a violent scorbutic humour, that covered her face and body with eruptions, rendered it impossible to approach her without sentiments of repugnance. Joseph, in the bitterness of his vexation, frequently lamented his destiny, which had united him to such a Princess. A Lady of the Court, with whom he lived in the closest friendship, and who, from her virtues, as well as from the superiority of her mind, merited all his confidence; has assured me, that he used frequently to come to her, in order, by her consoling conversation and society, to endeavour to dissipate his chagrin. Disclosing

to

to her his domeſtic vexations, and contraſting the perſonal as well as mental qualities of his firſt and ſecond wife; "Ma femme," ſaid he, "me devient inſupportable. Je "n'y reſiſte plus. On veut que j'ai des "enfans. Le moyen d'en avoir? Encore, "ſi je pourrois mettre le bout du doigt "ſur la plus petite partie de ſon corps, "qui n'étoit pas couverte de boutons, je "tacherois d'avoir des enfans." Anne of Cleves could not have been more odious to Henry the Eighth, than was the Bavarian Princeſs to Joſeph the Second.

Of all the Imperial Family, the Emperor Francis alone treated her with tenderneſs, protected and ſheltered her. The goodneſs of his heart, and the mildneſs of his nature, inclined him to pity a wretched Princeſs, who was much more an object of compaſſion, than of deteſtation. But, his death, which took place only ſeven months after her marriage, filled up the meaſure of her misfortunes. On the arrival of the intelligence of that event from Inſpruck at Vienna, ſhe wept

bitterly,

bitterly, often exclaming in the anguiſh of her feelings, "Ah! Malheureuſe! j'ai perdue "mon ſeul Appui!" Joſeph, by his father's deceaſe, became Emperor of Germany; but the increaſe of her dignity produced no amelioration whatſoever of the young Empreſs's private condition. During the remainder of her life, which was only a ſeries of privations and mortifications, ſhe ſaw herſelf neglected, deſpiſed and abandoned. Even her mother-in-law, the Empreſs Queen, though naturally beneficent and kind to all, yet is ſaid to have behaved towards her with coldneſs. The Archducheſs Chriſtina, who had always oppoſed the alliance, was at no pains to conceal her averſion for the Bavarian Princeſs. Joſeph, neither mollified by her ſubmiſſion, nor touched by her attachment, continued to treat her with contemptuous neglect; though her conſciouſneſs of being diſpleaſing to him was ſuch, and her apprehenſion of him ſo ſtrong, that ſhe would tremble and turn pale, whenever he entered the room.

Death

Death at length releaſed them from their mutual wretchedneſs. The young Empreſs ſickened of the ſmall-pox, in the month of May 1767, and the ſymptoms, from the beginning, were conſidered to be of the moſt alarming nature. Maria Thereſa herſelf caught the diſtemper from her daughter-in-law, but finally recovered. As long as his mother remained in health, the Emperor excuſed himſelf from viſiting his wife, under pretence that he ſhould incur the danger of communicating to the Empreſs Queen ſo fatal a diſorder. It was in vain that the unhappy Princeſs, apprehenſive of her approaching end, ardently requeſted once more to ſee her huſband. She even wrote to him, as it is ſaid, to demand this laſt proof of his regard. Joſeph ſtill continued inflexible; but, after his mother had contracted the ſame malady, there remained no longer any decent excuſe for his refuſal. He then viſited the dying Empreſs, and expreſſed his concern for her ſituation. The ſpecies of ſmall-pox which ſhe had con-

contracted, was of ſo malignant a kind, that it is affirmed, ſhe mortified in many parts of her body before death. Portions of her face became black and putrid; ſo that had ſhe even ſurvived, ſhe would probably have become an object too hideous for ſight. Under ſuch circumſtances, her diſſolution, which took place on the 28th of May 1767, could only be regarded by all as a fortunate releaſe. It is not a little ſingular, that the two wives of Joſeph the Second ſhould both have been carried off by the ſame diſtemper, in the courſe of three years and a half; after having conſtituted, one his felicity, and the other his miſfortune. He has conſtantly rejected all propoſitions of entering a third time into the married ſtate, and it is believed that he will perſiſt in his determination.

During the life of the firſt Archducheſs, to whom he was tenderly attached, Joſeph was never ſuppoſed to feel a diſtinguiſhing preference for any other woman. Even after her deceaſe, he remained ſo long a

prey to grief, that the Empreſs Queen herſelf did not ſcruple to encourage and requeſt the moſt beautiful or accompliſhed women of the Court, to endeavour to rouſe him from his dejection. His ſecond marriage far from renewing the happineſs that he had experienced in the firſt, only rendered him by compariſon more wretched. In ſuch a ſituation, it was no leſs natural than venial, that he ſhould form an attachment, at leaſt of mind, to ſome object. Among the ladies of the higheſt quality at Vienna, might juſtly be accounted Mademoiſelle de Battiani. As ſhe was the daughter of Marſhal Prince Battiani, who had been Joſeph's governor, their acquaintance commenced at a very early period of their lives. Her perſon, if not beautiful, was elegant and intereſting; her mind and manners pleaſing, no leſs than accompliſhed. When very young, ſhe had been married to Count Windiſchgratz, a match which was always conſidered as one formed by mutual inclination.

Driven

Driven by domeſtic infelicity to find conſolation and amuſement abroad, the Emperor, during ſeveral years, previous, as well as ſubſequent, to the death of his ſecond wife, ſhewed towards Madame de Windiſchgratz the moſt conſtant and diſtinguiſhing attention. In a ſelect ſociety with her, the Counteſs Eſterhazi her ſiſter, and a few others of both ſexes, he was accuſtomed to paſs moſt of his evenings. Among the number of perſons uſually admitted, was Count Choteck, for whom it was ſuppoſed that ſhe felt a much greater partiality than for Joſeph. But, as ſhe always treated his Imperial Majeſty with marks of regard and predilection, he appears neither to have felt or expreſſed any jealouſy on that account. His paſſion, if ſuch it can with propriety be denominated, was unqueſtionably not of a nature to exact any ſacrifices incompatible with female honor. Whether the moderation of his deſires, or the virtue of the Counteſs, formed her beſt ſecurity, it is certain that her character never

 ſuffered

ſuffered any juſt attaint from the Emperor's aſſiduities. They had for their principal, if not ſole object, her converſation and ſociety. Content with this intercourſe, he probably aſpired to nothing beyond it, and was rather to be conſidered as her friend and companion, than as her lover.

Madame de Windiſchgratz's health and conſtitution, which were naturally delicate, having ſuffered ſo much from the ſevere climate and penetrating winds of Auſtria, that ſhe was menaced with a conſumption, the baths and air of Piſa were recommended by the Phyſicians. She accordingly repaired thither ſome years ago, accompanied by her huſband. After paſſing about twelve months in Italy, ſhe returned to Vienna, apparently in perfect health, and completely recovered. Far from appearing to have ſuſtained any diminution by abſence, on the contrary, the Emperor's attachment and attentions redoubled towards her. But, with the approach of winter, her complaints, which had lain dormant for

ſome months, reviving with violence, ſoon aſſumed a dangerous aſpect; and all the ſymptoms of a confirmed diſorder of the lungs manifeſted themſelves. In this ſituation, Joſeph ſhewed her proofs of partiality, which while they did honor to the goodneſs of his heart, ſufficiently proved that his attachment had for its principal object, qualities unconnected with perſonal beauty. As ſhe was rendered by her malady unable to partake of public diverſions, or even to appear in company, he uſed to paſs almoſt every evening at her houſe. In the months of February and March 1777, when her cough had ſo enfeebled her, that ſhe was no longer in a ſtate to converſe, he not only continued his viſits, but in order to amuſe and enliven her, was accuſtomed to read to her for ſeveral hours at a time.

Soon afterwards, in April 1777, being then about to viſit France, he went on the morning of his departure, to take a laſt leave of Madame de Windiſchgratz: an interview which muſt have been extremely pain-

 ful,

ful, as both were equally conſcious that they ſhould probably ſee each other no more. A lady of the Court told me, that ſhe accidentally paſſed the Emperor, as he was aſcending the ſtaircaſe which led to the Counteſs's apartment. She added, that he ſtopt, with intent to ſpeak to her, but his voice, which was almoſt choked, betrayed his agitation and diſtreſs. In effect, they never met again, as Madame de Windiſchgratz died in the following month. It is natural to ſuppoſe that Joſeph muſt have been very deeply ſenſible to ſuch an event. I am nevertheleſs aſſured, that if he was ſo, he expreſſed at leaſt no extraordinary concern, nor manifeſted much emotion on receiving the intelligence; a circumſtance only to be explained by ſuppoſing that he could not be ignorant of, or unprepared for it, the nature of her diſorder leaving no hope of her recovery. When the information reached him, it muſt likewiſe be recollected that he was diſtant from her, and ſurrounded at Paris by a thouſand objects,

calculated

calculated to occupy his mind, or diſtract his attention.

Whatever was the nature of the Emperor's attachment to her, whether it partook moſt of eſteem, of friendſhip, or of tenderneſs; his heart appears to have been by no means ſhut againſt other female impreſſions, even during her life. Previous to her deceaſe, he had already manifeſted a ſtrong partiality for the Princeſs Charles Lichtenſtein; who, if ſhe did not ſupplant Madame de Windiſchgratz in his Majeſty's affections, at leaſt occupied a very diſtinguiſhed place in his regard. When the latter was no more, Joſeph transferred all his attentions to the Princeſs, and they continue to ſubſiſt at this moment in their full force. She is daughter of the Count of Oettingue Spielberg, and may be now four-and-thirty years of age. As long ago as the year 1761, ſhe married Prince Charles Lichtenſtein, one of the moſt gallant, amiable, and handſome noblemen of the Imperial Court. Her perſon is pleaſing, and though her features cannot be

 eſteemed

esteemed regular, their expression is admirable. Her mouth is peculiarly beautiful, and over her whole figure is diffused an air of modesty, intelligence, and dignity, rarely blended in any woman. She possesses besides, an enlarged and cultivated mind, a fund of amusing conversation, and powers of entertaining, as well as improving, very superior to the generality of her sex in Vienna. In mentioning these particulars, I speak in some measure from my own knowledge, added to information, as I have the honor to be personally acquainted with her.

Flattered as she unquestionably is with the partiality, and gratified by the attentions of the first Crowned Head in Europe, she has invariably acted with such caution and regard to her own honor, as to maintain unimpeached the purity of her character. No person here ventures to suppose, and still less to assert, that she has made to him any concession inconsistent with the strictest virtue. She is the object of Joseph's affection and friendship;

ſhip; not his miſtreſs. Thoſe who know her, entertain the firmeſt conviction, that even if the Emperor's ſolicitations were ever ſo ſtrong, yet her ſenſe of what ſhe owes to her family and herſelf, added to a religious and ſerious turn of mind, would render her ſuperior to ſeduction. But, Joſeph's attachment to her is not perſonal, in the ordinary acceptation of the term; though it may be difficult to ſay what are the preciſe limits which his moderation, or her principles, affix to the connexion. She rarely, or never receives him alone, though ſhe ſees him continually at her own houſe, as well as in private ſociety. Even at the theatre, a lady conſtantly remains in the box with her, when his Majeſty is there. A conduct, which is the reverſe of the late Emperor's; who, when he was in the Princeſs of Auerſberg's box, never admitted any intruſion, and locked it on the inſide. It is in the converſation of the Princeſs Charles Lichtenſtein, that Joſeph finds the moſt pleaſing relaxation from public buſineſs, as

well

well as from private disquietude; and this confidence probably forms the principal tye by which they are united. She disclaims even the smallest political influence or credit with the Emperor. I have heard her do so; while he, on his side, frequently cites as a maxim from which no Sovereign should deviate; that "Princes never ought to allow a woman, let her merit or talents be what they may, to acquire an ascendancy over their affections, on account of the political consequences which almost always result from such a passion."

At this very time, his Imperial Majesty usually passes four evenings every week, with the Princess Charles Lichtenstein, and a little circle chiefly composed of females. The ladies are, besides the Princess herself, her sister, the Countess Ernest Kaunitz, her sister-in-law, the Princess Francis Lichtenstein, and the two Princesses Clari and Kinski. Marshal Lacy, who has been attached near twenty years to the Princess Francis Lichtenstein, is generally admitted into

into this select society; and Count Rosemberg, the Lord Chamberlain, is likewise, sometimes, of the party. He is one of the most pleasing noblemen of the Imperial Court; who, under a cold exterior, conceals qualities equally solid and ingratiating. Polished in his manners, cultivated in his understanding, and highly acceptable to his master; if he possessed ambition equal to his talents, it is probable, that he might, at some future time, act a conspicuous part on the political theatre. But, his love of pleasure, joined to the indolence of his temper, will retain him always in the shade. Neither Prince Charles Lichtenstein, nor his brother Prince Francis, ever presume to invade this Coterie, though their wives compose its most interesting parts. The French Embassador, Monsieur de Breteuil, at his particular request, was once or twice allowed to be present there. Finding however, that his intrusion was not acceptable to the Emperor, and that it imposed a degree of re-

straint

ſtraint on the pleaſures of the company, he withdrew himſelf, and returned no more.

The perſons above named, male and female, meet alternately at each other's houſes, to which Joſeph repairs with the utmoſt privacy, unattended and alone. I know that he himſelf conſtitutes the principal entertainment of the party, and its chief occupation. He commonly talks, while the ladies liſten and admire. Lacy, as well as Roſemberg, are probably too experienced Courtiers, to invade ſo ſacred a prerogative. Cards are never brought, for the Emperor diſlikes them; the laſt time that he ever ſat down to play, having been in 1764, after his coronation at Francfort. It is true that the ladies, deſirous of varying the evening amuſement, attempted, ſome time ago, to introduce a book, by way of change; but, the experiment did not ſucceed. Joſeph prefers converſation. On the three evenings of the week, which he does not paſs in the above-mentioned ſociety; unleſs prevented by public buſineſs, he commonly

monly goes for a ſhort time to the Princeſs Eſterhazi's, or to Madame de Burckhauſen's. During the courſe of the preſent winter, unlike the laſt, he has ſhewn himſelf rarely at Prince Kaunitz's, or in any numerous companies.

Joſeph the Second is rather above than below the middle ſize, and in no degree inclined to corpulency. Though not handſome, he may be accounted agreeable in his perſon, and when young, he muſt have been elegant. Thoſe perſons who ſaw him on the day of his nuptials with the Princeſs of Parma, when he was magnificently habited in the old Spaniſh dreſs, which was calculated to add to the natural advantages of his figure; aſſert, that they never beheld a finer youth. The Counteſs of Pergen, who was a ſpectatreſs of his coronation at Francfort in 1764, has declared to me, that he appeared to her the moſt majeſtic and ſtriking object on which ſhe ever looked, when he was inveſted with the royal robes and Inſignia; his thick hair falling down

over

over his back in ringlets. He had then a head of hair, such as is ascribed to Apollo by the Poets. So bald is he now become at only thirty-eight, that on the crown of his head, scarcely any covering remains; and in order to conceal the defect, he wears a false toupee. His queue is very thin, but it is his own, and not an artificial one, like that of the Great Frederic.

The Emperor's countenance is full of meaning and intelligence. I have rarely seen a more speaking physiognomy; and it is impossible to look at him, without conceiving a favourable idea of his understanding. His eye, which is quick, sparkles with animation. The contour of his face is long and thin, his complexion fair, his nose aquiline, his teeth white, even, and good. An air of mind, which is spread over his features, pleases and prejudices in his favour. The formation of his body and legs is by no means without defect, though he is capable of severe exercise, and of sustaining great fatigue. Nor can his general state of health be accounted

counted ſuch, as to afford a reaſonable proſpect of his attaining to very advanced age. Beſides the aneuriſm in his leg, which I have formerly mentioned, he has another extraordinary ſource of diſeaſe; it is an excreſcence, of the nature of a wen, on the crown of his head, which naturally increaſes in ſize, and may become dangerous in proceſs of time. Conſcious of the hazard that he muſt incur, if it ſhould grow large, or ſuppurate; he has already conſulted Brambilla his ſurgeon, on the ſubject, who means to extract it with the knife: an operation, which it is probable will not be long delayed.

No Prince can be more indifferent than the Emperor, with regard to all the delicacies, indulgences, and luxuries of life. Few ſovereigns devote ſo much time to buſineſs, and ſo little to pleaſure or diſſipation. It is very rare that he ever makes any perſon wait, who comes to him by appointment. "I was accuſtomed," ſays he, "to paſs too many hours in my father's antichamber, not to know from experience,

"how

" how unpleasant such a detention must be " to others." Francis by no means observed the same punctuality in giving audience. Joseph rises early, and takes for breakfast either coffee and milk, or chocolate, with which he mixes water, seldom eating any thing at that time. In order to dispatch public business with more facility, he generally dines alone; his dinner being dressed in the great kitchen of the palace; for he has no private kitchen. His meal, except on meagre days, or in Lent, consists of five dishes; a soup, Bouillie, vegetables, a Fricassee, and a Roti. These are brought to his apartment in five deep dishes, placed one upon the other, as the "Traiteurs" are used to do; and when ready, they are laid on the stove which heats the room, in order to keep them warm. The nominal hour for his dinner is two o'clock, but frequently he is so occupied, that he does not sit down till five; and he then swallows it half cold, with only a single servant to attend on him. Though he eats heartily, it is without any degree

degree of delicacy, or ſelection; and he is ſo indifferent about every thing relating to the table, that he ſcarcely diſtinguiſhes game from poultry. Wine he rarely touches; and when he does, only in very ſmall quantity.

While the Emperor is at dinner, he generally talks to the perſon who waits on him, and afterwards frequently reſumes the buſineſs of the day. This is his conſtant mode of life here in Vienna, ſcarcely ever unbending in the ſociety of a few friends: a part of his character by no means amiable, and in which he certainly does not either imitate or reſemble the great philoſopher of "Sans Souci," who tempers the cares of royalty by the practice of Horace and Anacreon; by the circulation of the glaſs, and the company of men of letters, genius, or taſte. Joſeph's repaſts are ſolitary, ſoon finiſhed, and deſtitute of gaiety and conviviality. When travelling, or on a campaign, he relaxes however from this ſeverity, eats with the officers or noblemen about his perſon,

 and

and though extremely temperate in every respect, yet he is communicative, lively, and entertaining at table.

In bodily accomplishments the Emperor is not deficient; supplying in activity what he wants either in skill or address. He rides well, plays at Tennis, and is fond of hunting, or rather of shooting. The exercises as well as diversions peculiarly characteristic of youth, he no longer considers as proper for his time of life; and that of dancing in particular, he has long renounced. When Archduke, he danced extremely well; and even since his accession to the Imperial dignity, he has not declined it on particular occasions. The last time that he danced publickly at Court, was soon after the death of his second wife, about eleven years ago, in a superb "Ballet," with several of the young nobility of both sexes. His partner was the Archduchess Amelia, since married to the Duke of Parma; and who was then one of the most beautiful Princesses in Europe. He wore a superb fancy dress; and a cir-

a circumſtance which ſeems very contradictory to the other features of his character is, that he not only put on Rouge himſelf, but commanded all the gentlemen who danced in the "Ballet" with him to do the ſame.

The late Emperor Francis, though ſuperficial and ignorant in the eſſential branches of education or improvement, yet poſſeſſed many qualities calculated to dazzle and conciliate mankind. He was a liberal protector of all the fine arts, particularly Muſic, Painting, and Sculpture. Nor did he fail to expend very conſiderable ſums in the encouragement, or the ſupport of artiſts eminent in thoſe walks. Joſeph, on the contrary, appeared to be wholly inſenſible to the arts, not only before his father's death, but, for a conſiderable time ſubſequent to that event. So little taſte had he for painting, that he uſually turned his back with contempt on the fineſt productions of the great maſters, Flemiſh or Italian. Though endowed by nature with an excellent ear,

he betrayed no partiality even for music. For sedentary occupations, for reading, and the improvement that results from the study of polite letters, he manifested a total disinclination. By degrees, however, his indifference for works of genius has diminished. He found it impossible to visit Italy, and to become familiar with the monuments of art profusely scattered over that beautiful country, without catching some portion of enthusiasm. On his return from Rome and Florence, some years ago, he began gradually to display this change in his character; by causing the finest pieces of painting to be collected from all the palaces of the Empress Queen, and brought to the "Belvedere." He even superintended in person, and directed the placing of the most capital pictures in the gallery of the above-mentioned palace. Prince Kaunitz piques himself on having, by his example and exhortations, awakened, directed, and formed the Emperor's taste. He is no longer insensible to the charms of music; and at this time has pri-
 vate

vate concerts frequently in his own apartments, where he and his brother the Great Duke of Tuſcany perform in perſon. On the harpſichord Joſeph plays in a maſterly manner, accompanying the inſtrument with his voice; and he is no mean performer on the violin. But, as a patron of learning, or of the fine arts, it muſt nevertheleſs be admitted, that he neither manifeſts the ſame paſſion, nor extends to them the ſame munificent protection, which diſtinguiſhed his father.

By the demiſe of the late Emperor, he ſucceeded, without farther form of election, to the Imperial dignity; and he was at the ſame time conſtituted by Maria Thereſa, co-regent of all the hereditary dominions of the Houſe of Auſtria; an example which has hitherto neither been imitated by Catherine the Second in Ruſſia, nor by Mary of Braganza in Portugal. Thoſe Princeſſes, though both of them have ſons already at an age to mix in council, or to aſſume an active part in ſtate-affairs; yet, far from aſſociating them to the Government, have on the con-

trary retained the whole royal authority in their own hands. Perhaps their are moments, when the Empress Queen may regret that she has delegated any portion of her power to her son. Unquestionably they have differed in sentiment, on more than one important measure; and Frederic well knows that it is Joseph, not Maria Theresa, with whom he is in fact contending at this hour, for the Bavarian succession. She remains indeed the efficient Sovereign, and is considered as such by her subjects. But the degree of dignity and consequence which is annexed to the Imperial Crown, added to the consideration of her sex, age, and increasing infirmities, conduce to give to the Emperor very great and indefinite powers, both at home and abroad. Her maternal fondness has conferred, and the activity, combined with the ambition of his character, impel him to exercise many prerogatives, which in strictness cannot be his till after her decease. It is difficult, perhaps impossible to define, what are the precise limits of their

their refpective prerogatives; but many acts of ftate evidently originate with, and are promulgated by Jofeph, rather than by Maria Therefa. They bear the ftamp of his mind, which only waited for the fignal of his father's death, to develope and expand itfelf in a certain degree. I fhall illuftrate this obfervation, which I have already made elfewhere, by an enumeration of fome of the leading meafures of Jofeph fince 1765, in his capacity of Emperor of Germany, as well as in that of co-regent of Hungary and Bohemia. It is by following thefe guides, that we fhall be beft able to form an eftimate of his real character, difpofition, and talents.

The firft act of his adminiftration, though one which was rather perfonal than political, merited great eulogiums, and tended to convey an elevated idea of his way of thinking on pecuniary points. The late Emperor, who always confidered himfelf as a foreigner, left not only various landed eftates in Germany and Hungary, purchafed with his own money

 during

during his life; but, likewiſe, a conſiderable ſum in ready caſh, all which deſcended to his eldeſt ſon. Joſeph retained the lands, but he inſtantly gave up the money, amounting to ſome millions of florins, as a fund for paying the debts of the Crown; thus leaving himſelf, in ſome meaſure, dependent on the bounty of his mother. Such a proof that he felt no ſeparate or private intereſt diſtinct from that of the State, neceſſarily impreſſed his ſubjects with reſpect for his character, and is never mentioned here without a juſt tribute of praiſe.

This act of diſintereſtedneſs was immediately ſucceeded by another, calculated to acquire univerſal popularity, and to conciliate in a peculiar manner the affections of the lower ranks. On the north of Vienna are ſituated two very extenſive parks, or gardens; one called the "Prater," the other the "Hof Garten," almoſt adjoining the city itſelf. As both were the immediate property of the Empreſs Queen, none except perſons of quality were ever allowed

to

to enter them; and even that favored order enjoyed that privilege only during particular months of the year. Joseph, instantly after his accession, threw open both these pleasure-gardens, and gave the most ample permission to every person, of whatever description, to walk or ride in them, at all seasons. The game laws have likewise been relaxed, and leave has been granted to the peasants to fire on, and destroy the wild boars; animals, which, under the late reign, were regarded as sacred, and who committed with impunity the greatest ravages on the lands of the farmers. This edict excited no little discontent among the nobility; but its effects on the inferior orders may be easily conceived. Other regulations, favourable to the personal emancipation of the latter class from the severity of feudal rights, and tending to diminish the power of the great landed proprietors, have since been issued by the Emperor.

All his measures seem more or less obviously directed to suppress expence, and to

expedite or facilitate the dispatch of public business in every department. Francis loved diversions, entertainments, and the splendor of royalty; Joseph resembles him in none of these respects. During the late reign, there always existed a French theatre in Vienna; but, as the concourse of people who resorted to it, was not sufficiently numerous to defray the expences of the house, gaming-tables were permitted by Government. Every Faro table paid ten ducats, or about four guineas, to the managers of the theatre; and from this source, aided by the Emperor's private liberality, the French Comedy derived a great part of its support. His present Majesty published an "Ordonnance," on his attaining the Imperial dignity, by which, Faro, and every other Game of Hazard, previously allowed at the French Theatre, were prohibited. The necessary consequence of such a regulation, was the loss of the Comedy itself, which could no longer subsist, unless by a pecuniary gratification from the private purse

of

of the Sovereign, which he did not think proper to beſtow on a company of foreign comedians.

From the Theatre, Joſeph proceeded to regulate the Court, and all the public offices. During the late Emperor's life, the number of birth-days and Gala-days obſerved at Court, was prodigious, amounting to near forty in a year. All the nobility, miniſters, and great officers, civil as well as military, appeared at the drawing-room on thoſe occaſions; and the expence neceſſarily incurred by the ſplendid ſuits worn, was frequently productive of ſerious inconvenience. One of the firſt acts of Joſeph was totally to aboliſh both Gala and birth-days. He appointed at the ſame time, the firſt of January, as the anniverſary on which all the nobility ſhould kiſs the Empreſs Queen's and his hand; prohibiting any ſort of public notice to be taken, or any attention to be paid to all other days without exception. He even enforces ſo rigid an obſervance of this order, as not to permit his immediate ſervants

and

and attendants to expreſs the leaſt mark of feſtivity, or to make the ſlighteſt alteration in their ordinary dreſs, on his own birth-day.

Till the death of Francis in 1765, the old Spaniſh habit, derived from the time of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, was univerſally worn at the Court of Vienna, on all days of Gala or of ceremony. Francis, who ſcarcely ever appeared in a uniform, was accuſtomed to change his dreſſes very frequently, and affected magnificence of apparel. Joſeph has never worn any coat except a uniform, ſince his father's deceaſe. The Spaniſh habit, though ſplendid and impoſing, connected it with many inconveniences: among others, long preſcription had authorized, that the Aulic Counſellors never could meet for the diſpatch of buſineſs, except in that dreſs. Of courſe, affairs of importance were frequently poſtponed, and even ſacrificed to an abſurd Etiquette. The preſent Emperor, conſcious of the abuſe, and of the public detriment that reſulted from

from it, forbade the uſe of the Spaniſh dreſs on any occaſion whatever. He commanded the Aulic Counſellors, from that time forward, not only to aſſemble in their ordinary dreſs; but even obliged the members to meet after dinner, as well as in the morning, for the more prompt tranſaction of affairs.

In external addreſs Joſeph the Second is not deficient. His manners are eaſy, his converſation lively, voluble, and entertaining; running rapidly from one ſubject to another, and diſplaying frequently a vaſt variety of knowledge. Perhaps he manifeſts too great a conſciouſneſs of poſſeſſing extenſive information; and he may be reproached likewiſe with frequently anticipating the anſwers of the perſons with whom he converſes. A mixture of vanity and of impetuoſity conduce to this defect. While he talks, eſpecially if eager, he always plays with the money in his pocket. He writes with eaſe, perſpicuity, and propriety. I have ſeen many of his notes, evidently compoſed without premeditation, addreſſed

to persons who enjoyed his confidence, both men and women. They demonstrate feeling, enlargement of mind, and as I have thought, goodness of heart. Yet I know, from indisputable authority, that he is a profound dissembler, rarely or never speaking his real sentiments upon any point of moment. On the other hand, he certainly permits those whom he loves or esteems, to deal fairly with him; to tell him not only plain, but painful truths; and even to reprehend him on occasion with severity.

I have reason to think, that his religious opinions are by no means contracted or illiberal. The bigotry and superstition which for ages have been hereditary in the House of Austria, and which still survive in all their force in Maria Theresa, will probably be extinct in her successor. But, I am so far from meaning to insinuate that he is on that account tinctured with infidelity, deism, or any of the doctrines inculcated at Ferney, and at "Sans Souci;" that the very reverse is the fact. When he passed through Switzer-

Switzerland, he declined ſeeing or viſiting Voltaire; not leſs, I believe, from his own choice, than at his mother's requeſt. Joſeph, though no bigot, is a Catholic, convinced of the great truths of the Chriſtian Religion, and conforming to many, if not to all its injunctions in his practice. He not only confeſſes regularly, but as ſoon as he riſes, he never fails every morning, on his knees to offer up his prayers to the Divine Being; as he does in the ſame devout poſture, before he retires to reſt. I cannot err in this fact, which I derive from an eye-witneſs of the higheſt rank, who would neither flatter nor deceive. If, in the enumeration of ſo many minute particulars, I may have related ſome which ſeem diſcordant or contradictory, it muſt be remembered that man is compoſed of inconſiſtencies, and ever at variance with himſelf.

At no period of his life has the preſent Emperor been a libertine, or addicted to exceſſes of women, as was Francis his father, and as his brother Leopold is well known to be at this time. For the Counteſs Windiſchgratz, and for the Princeſs Charles Lichtenſtein,

ſtein; he probably never nouriſhed any ſentiment except friendſhip, cemented by affectionate eſteem and confidence. Aſſiduous, rather than tender, moderate in all his deſires, and content with the ſociety of his miſtreſs, he is a companion, not a lover. His amours, when he has had any, have always been of ſhort duration, managed with privacy, unaccompanied either with ſcandal or expence, and entailing no conſequences. Yet, in a crowd, under ſhelter of the night, where he conceives that he is neither known nor obſerved, he likes to accoſt women of inferior condition, and perhaps to take ſome harmleſs liberties with their perſon, which is uſually the utmoſt extent of his gallantry.

As the Emperor has no miſtreſs, ſo he has in reality no favorite. Several perſons who have ſeemed to be ſo for a time, and who have believed themſelves in poſſeſſion of his perſonal affection, have been deceived. General Noſtitz, whom he diſtinguiſhed exceedingly during a certain period, has proved the truth of this aſſertion. The two Counts, Cobenzel, and Joſeph

Joſeph Colloredo, both of whom accompanied him to Paris in 1777, poſſeſs, it is true, much of his eſteem and confidence; but, they are not favorites. Count Dietrichſtein, from long habits of familiarity with the Emperor, added to the ſpirit of independence, the frankneſs, and gaiety of diſpoſition, which eminently characterize him, enjoys, and exerciſes perhaps more than any nobleman of the Court, the privilege of ſpeaking truth to his Maſter. That his Majeſty honors, as well as reſpects Laudohn, and conſults him on every military point of importance, is unqueſtionable. For Lacy he reſerves his friendſhip, viſits him at all hours, converſes with him unreſervedly, and communicates to him his moſt ſecret thoughts.

Joſeph and Frederic, unlike the generality of Princes who know each other only by report, are perſonally acquainted, having twice met in their reſpective dominions. The firſt of theſe two celebrated interviews, took place about four years after the death

of the late Emperor Francis, when his present Majesty was not nine-and-twenty. It may be said to have originated with the King of Prussia, who desirous, no doubt of forming his own opinion, (after a close and accurate inspection,) on the character and talents of the new head of the Empire, caused it to be signified at the Court of Vienna, that a meeting between them would be highly agreeable to himself. The proposal having pleased, Count Dietrichstein, Master of the Horse, was sent to Breslau, to confer with Frederic, and to settle all the preliminaries. Neiss, a town in Silesia, was fixed on for the place of rendezvous, whither Joseph repaired in September 1769, accompanied by his brother-in-law Prince Albert of Saxony, Marshal Lacy, General Laudohn, Count Dietrichstein, and several other noblemen or military officers.

Arriving in his carriage, just before the hour of dinner, he was received by Frederic, at the foot of the staircase of the house which he occupied at Neiss; and after mutually gazing on each other for a single moment,

moment they embraced, with demonstrations of reciprocal pleaſure. Each Sovereign having preſented to the other the perſons who accompanied him; among whom, on the ſide of his Pruſſian Majeſty, were the Prince Royal his nephew, the Hereditary Prince of Brunſwic, and ſeveral general officers; the two Monarchs ſat down immediately to a table of about thirty covers. Frederic was in excellent humor, and Joſeph appeared to be equally happy. About thirty thouſand Pruſſian troops had been aſſembled, in order to entertain the Emperor; and Frederic taking the command of them in perſon, performed a variety of manœuvres, with which his gueſt expreſſed the utmoſt ſatisfaction. They paſſed three days together, during the whole of which time Joſeph was lodged at an inn in the town. A miſerable company of German comedians, brought thither for the purpoſe, ſerved, if not to enliven, at leaſt to paſs away the evenings. In the day-time, the two Sovereigns rode out ſide by ſide,

ſide, and converſed with great familiarity: but, from the moment of their meeting, to that of their ſeparation, they never were alone together, except once for about ten minutes. On the fourth morning they parted, mutually impreſſed with a favorable idea of each other, and on terms of apparent amity. Political buſineſs was not ever mentioned on either ſide, nor was it intended to form any part of the interview. Joſeph has been accuſed, I believe, without juſt reaſon, of treating the Hereditary Prince of Brunſwic with coldneſs at Neiſs. Even had he felt any ill-will towards that illuſtrious perſon, he is too ſkilful a diſſembler, to make it probable that he would manifeſt his diſlike on ſuch an occaſion, and before ſuch ſpectators.

The firſt interview between Frederic and Joſeph, unqueſtionably aroſe principally from the curioſity natural to both Sovereigns, to ſee and to converſe with each other. But, the ſecond meeting was meant for more concealed and important purpoſes.

It took place juſt a year later, in the firſt days of September 1770, at the little town of Neuſtadt in Moravia, to which place his Pruſſian Majeſty came, in order to return the viſit. Unlike the Emperor, though far more advanced in years, he performed the journey from Breſlau entirely on horſeback; accompanied as before, by his two nephews, the Hereditary Princes of Pruſſia and Brunſwic, together with a number of general officers. Deſirous of ingratiating himſelf with Joſeph, whoſe conſent and co-operation he wanted in the projected partition of Poland, he arrived at Neuſtadt, habited in an Auſtrian regimental. Not only the King himſelf, but, all the perſons with him, were dreſſed in white uniforms, with facings or lapels, ſuch as in the Imperial ſervice are uſually given to recruits, before they are put altogether in full uniform. That of Frederic was diſtinguiſhed from the reſt, by being embroidered at the button-holes with ſilver. When he diſmounted from his horſe, Joſeph was ready to receive him; and after they

had embraced, as at Neifs, the King pointing to thofe who attended him, faid, "Votre Ma-" jefté verra que je lui ai amené des recrus." The delicacy of fuch a compliment, which could not be overlooked or mifunderftood, tended to produce mutual good humor on their firft meeting.

During the whole courfe of the repaft which followed, Frederic ftudioufly obferved a degree of refpect towards the Emperor, making a motion as if to rife, every time that a plate was fet before him, and offering it firft to Jofeph, as his fuperior. But, it was towards Prince Kaunitz that he exerted all his endeavours to pleafe, to conciliate, and to captivate. That Minifter, duped by the offers, or gained by the blandifhments of Pruffia, had accompanied his mafter, for the exprefs purpofe of fettling the preliminaries, and adjufting the terms on which Poland was to be difmembered. I have already entered fully on the fubject elfewhere, and fhall not, therefore, refume it here. Frederic complete-ly fucceeded in his object, and the fate of the

Poles was decided at Neuſtadt. Amuſements, military as well as theatrical, ſerved to veil the ſecret of ſtate from common eyes. Joſeph in his turn had aſſembled thirty thouſand troops, for the inſpection of his royal gueſt, who paſſed them in review, and beſtowed on them high encomiums. Unfortunately, the weather, during the whole time that the interview laſted, was ſo rainy, as greatly to diminiſh the pleaſure of the two Sovereigns. Both were repeatedly wet to the ſkin; and Frederic, on his return from the field, having no other coat with him than the one which he wore, was obliged to ſtrip, and to remain a priſoner in his own room, till his coat could be dried at the fire. This event produced no little merriment.

The Emperor made every poſſible exertion to amuſe and entertain his Pruſſian Majeſty, while at Neuſtadt. A private houſe, the beſt that could be procured in the town, was fitted up for his reception: in place of a ſtrolling company of German comedians,

an Italian opera was performed; and Noverre, with all his "Figurantés," were brought from Vienna at a conſiderable expence, to dance the "Ballets." Frederic, with conſummate addreſs, always placed Prince Kaunitz between himſelf and Joſeph, when at the theatre, and ſhewed the Auſtrian Prime Miniſter a thouſand attentions. After the performance, the political conferences were held. During the two firſt days, no cloud aroſe to indiſpoſe the two Monarchs towards each other; but on the third, the King received letters by a courier from Peterſburgh, the nature of which he did not immediately communicate to the Emperor, who conceiving that he had a right to know their tenor, manifeſted ſome ill-humor at their concealment. Frederic then grew in turn ſour, and out of temper. In this frame of mind they ſeparated next morning, alienated from each other as much as they had been prepoſſeſſed favorably at their firſt interview. But, Poland was not leſs ſacrificed, within two years afterwards, to their

mutual

mutual ambition. Theſe particulars are derived from the beſt information.

Among the characteriſtic features of Joſeph, muſt be accounted his paſſion for travelling; ſcarcely any Prince of whom we read, having ſo minutely examined his own dominions. Adrian, in antiquity, and Charles the Fifth, in modern ages, whoſe whole reigns were a perpetual journey, can alone be compared in this point of view, to the preſent Emperor. He has viſited nearly all the Courts of Italy; and when he went to Paris, two years ago, it was his intention to have proſecuted his tour as far as Madrid, if not to Liſbon. With that deſign he traverſed the whole kingdom of France, and was already arrived at St. Sebaſtian in Biſcay, on his way to the capital of Spain; when a courier from Vienna, informing him that the Empreſs Queen was greatly indiſpoſed, and that his return was neceſſary, compelled him to deſiſt from his further progreſs. Every part of Bohemia, Hungary, and Tranſylvania, he has rode over, almoſt

at a footpace: nor has he omitted to inſpect the Sclavonian frontier, as far as Semlin; and to go in a boat upon the Danube, to the walls, and quite under the cannon of Belgrade. Of all the extenſive territories, ſcattered over ſo great a portion of Europe, which will devolve to him at the death of Maria Thereſa, the Auſtrian Netherlands alone, he has not yet ſurveyed in perſon. Along the Turkiſh, as well as on the Saxon and Sileſian borders, he has cauſed forts to be erected, and has taken every precaution to guarantee thoſe provinces from invaſion. Lacy and Laudohn have uſually accompanied him in his progreſs through his dominions; during which, far from regarding inconvenience or fatigue, his enemies rather accuſe him of needleſsly expoſing himſelf to both. In order to accuſtom himſelf to hardſhips and privations, he commonly ſleeps upon a ſkin laid on the floor, and his table is not more delicate than his bed.

Still unſatisfied, while any part of his dominions remained to viſit, he ſet out not many

many years ſince, to inſpect the vaſt portion of Poland ſeized on in 1772, extending from the frontiers of Auſtrian Sileſia, along the Northern borders of Hungary, to thoſe of Moldavia. The Emperor aſſured Sir Robert Keith, on his return from that expedition, in which he underwent every poſſible inconvenience, and ſuffered many hardſhips, that among others, he was almoſt devoured by bugs, and in ſpite of all his precautions, he became louſy to a great degree. As a proof of it, he ſaid, that being one day employed in writing a letter to his mother the Empreſs, a louſe fell from his hair on the paper. "I blew him off," continued he, and finiſhed my
" diſpatch. Juſt as I was about to ſeal it, I
" recollected a circumſtance, which in my
" hurry had eſcaped me. Having opened
" the letter again, in order to inſert it, to
" my ſurprize, I found the louſe had got
" poſſeſſion of his old poſt. I attempted to
" diſlodge him, but he maintained his ground, and I therefore let him alone,
" only adding, as a poſtſcript, at the foot of
" the paper—One of your Majeſty's new
" Poliſh

"Poliſh ſubjects abſolutely inſiſts on being "preſented to you. I have endeavoured in "vain to prevent him, and I have, there- "fore, encloſed him in this letter." The anecdote, however trifling, may ſerve to ſhew the turn of Joſeph's mind, which is not deſtitute of humor.

In his expences and pleaſures, public, as well as perſonal, he is very economical; a quality which has generally, though not univerſally, diſtinguiſhed ſuperior Princes, and which muſt greatly facilitate all his enterprizes or operations, whenever he aſcends the throne. Neither women, nor play, nor diſſipations of any kind drain his purſe. I aſked a lady who knows him well, whether he was ſuppoſed to have any natural children. "I can't abſolutely ſay," anſwered ſhe; "but, this I can take upon me to aſſert, "that if he has any, they will never be a "charge to the State. Cinquante ducats "par ann. ſeront tout leur Appenage." In the month of January laſt year, a "Courſe "de traineaux" was exhibited in Vienna, for the amuſement of the Archducheſs of Milan.

Milan. A quantity of ſnow had been brought into the city, on the ſame morning, in carts, which was ſcattered over the ſtreets through which the ſledges muſt neceſſarily paſs. The expence might amount to about ſix hundred florins, or ſomewhat more than ſixty pounds. I was ſtanding in a balcony, to view the ſpectacle, with two ladies of the Court. "You have no idea," ſaid they, "of the vexation that it will cauſe the Emperor, to throw away ſix hundred florins "in ſnow." His attention on pecuniary points, extends to the minuteſt detail, and is imputed to him as a fault: perhaps it may be ſuch; but it muſt be allowed that his ſubjects derive no little benefit from ſuch parſimony.

I have heard the queſtion much and frequently agitated here, among perſons who are moſt competent to decide, whether Joſeph is naturally generous, or penurious. Opinions are greatly divided on the point. He certainly is open to the impreſſions of compaſſion and benevolence, where he knows, or believes that the perſon recommended, is a proper

proper object of such sentiments. But his heart is not one of those, which, like Maria Theresa's, delights in giving; and if it errs, only does so from an excess of liberality and kindness towards the unfortunate. The Emperor well knows that he is regarded as unlike her in this respect. "On m'accuse," said he not long ago, "de n'être pas généreux; mais, si je donnois comme ma mére, "nous n'aurions bientot rien à donner." It cannot however be denied, that the liberality of the Empress acquires her universal affection and popularity; while the strict economy of her son, though it may augment his resources, does not tend to conciliate the love of his subjects, or to give an elevated idea of his character and disposition to foreign nations.

The Emperor's personal courage is considered as indisputable; yet, I think it stood higher in the public estimation before the late campaign, than it does at present. If however he is brave, it certainly is not the bravery of a hero: it is neither the sublime courage that distinguished the great Condé,

nor

nor is it the cool intrepidity and contempt of death, which Frederic has frequently difplayed, when he has almoft wantonly expofed himfelf in the heat of action. The different fituation and motives of the two Princes, ought not, however, to be forgotten. So defperate was the condition of his Pruffian Majefty at Lignitz, at Torgau, and on a variety of other occafions during the great war of feven years, that defeat and death were to him in effect almoft the fame thing. His troops required not merely example, but, demanded the animation of defpair, to enable them to conquer. Jofeph, acting on the defenfive, fecure in his entrenchments, his numbers, and his inattackable pofition; might confult, like Louis the Fourteenth, his own fafety, as well as his glory. It is certain, that during the laft campaign he never fhunned danger; but neither did he court it. No one ever faw him expofe his perfon, though he paffed the night repeatedly in the outpofts, where Marfhal Haddick once furprized him, and took the liberty to re-

prehend

prehend him for ſuch imprudence; a freedom, which it is ſaid, diſpleaſed the Emperor.

His talents for war are, however, much more problematical than his perſonal courage. That his preſence and interference were injurious to the Auſtrian arms, during the late campaign, no longer can admit of any doubt. If, like his father and grandfather, he had been content to remain at Vienna, and to delegate to others the conduct of military affairs, Laudohn would not have let ſlip the moment of attacking Mellendorf, on his retreat into Saxony; an opportunity which never can return, and for the loſs of which, that illuſtrious General will not eaſily forgive his maſter. That the Emperor has wiſhed for a rupture, that he beheld with pleaſure all the preparations for it, and that he expected to acquire reputation in the field, is indiſputable. But, experience may have undeceived him, and have convinced him how widely different are theory and practice. Previous to the preſent hoſtilities, he panted for

for an occafion to put himfelf at the head of his forces, and to meafure himfelf with Frederic.

On his journey to France, two years ago, paffing through Munich, he had there a long interview with the Duchefs Dowager of Bavaria, fifter of the prefent Electrefs Palatine; a Princefs whom I have already mentioned as enjoying the confidence of his Pruffian Majefty, and who maintains a regular correfpondence with him. The converfation, which was animated on both fides, produced infenfibly a difcuffion of the comparative merit of Sovereigns, warlike and pacific. The Duchefs artfully led him on to fpeak his fentiments, by affecting to prefer the latter defcription of Princes to the former. Jofeph's eyes flafhed fire, and no longer able to conceal his wifhes; Madame," faid he, "J'aimerois mieux être capitaine "dans mes propres grenadièrs, que d'être "Empereur, fi je ne devois pas être Guer-"rier." Confcious that he had difclofed

too much, he afterwards endeavoured to do away the impreſſion; but the Ducheſs was not to be ſo deceived. She foretold, that he would ſeize the firſt favourable opportunity of coming to a rupture with Pruſſia, and would appear in perſon at the head of his forces, whenever war commenced. Time has proved that ſhe was not miſtaken in her conjecture.

All the qualities and paſſions of the Emperor are however evidently either ſubſervient to, or ſwallowed up in his ambition. Hence his affection for the ſoldiery, his inſpection of their barracks, his affectation of wearing, like Frederic, no other dreſs than a uniform, his ſolicitous attention to the ſick and wounded; in a word, his anxiety to acquire the confidence of the troops, and to ſhew them that in him they will find a father and a leader, no leſs than a Sovereign. Towards the Hungarians and Croats, he is accuſed of having manifeſted a partiality, which, if founded in fact, might occaſion

general diſſatisfaction; but, he is probably too politic to alienate by ſo injudicious a preference, the hearts of his forces. They conſtitute the engine, by which he was enabled to ſeize on ſo large a portion of Poland in 1772, and on Lower Bavaria in 1778. It is only to them that he can look in the firſt inſtance, for the future ſupport, extenſion, and aggrandizement of his dominions. But, he muſt likewiſe look to another quarter, for the means of fully gratifying his wiſhes on this, and on every other point: I mean, to the death of his mother, the Empreſs Queen. He may, and I believe he does, in common with his ſubjects, deprecate more than deſire, ſuch an event. It is, nevertheleſs, the only one, which, by emancipating him from all reſtraint, can unveil his real character. The deceaſe of the late Emperor, while it partly diſcloſed his qualities to the world, left others ſtill concealed. I have delineated him as he now is, without partiality, as without prejudice.

In order to know him completely, it is requisite that he should survive Maria Theresa. Then, and not till then, we shall be able to appreciate in their utmost extent, the virtues, and the defects of Joseph the Second.

## LETTER XXXIV.

*Character, and anecdotes of Prince Kaunitz, first Minister of Maria Theresa.*

VIENNA, *March* 13th, 1779.

THE picture that I have drawn of the Imperial Court, would still be incomplete and deficient, if not accompanied by some particulars of Prince Kaunitz; who, though not at the head of the Austrian finances, yet may justly be denominated first Minister. His talents, services, and an uninterrupted possession of power during near five-and-twenty years, leave him no competitor in the favor or esteem of Maria Theresa. His authority is too firmly consolidated, to be easily shaken, even by the event of her death; and it is probable, that he would occupy the same situation under Joseph, which he has so long filled in the Councils of the Empress. Born in February 1711, he has consequently completed his

 sixty-eighth

ſixty-eighth year; but, the advances of age ſeem neither to have impaired the freſhneſs of his intellects, nor materially to have diminiſhed his bodily activity and ſtrength. At an early period of his life, he was initiated into public buſineſs, having acted in the capacity of civil Governor of Bruſſels, during the firſt years of the preſent reign. At the Congreſs of Aix-la-Chappelle in 1748, he was one of the Auſtrian Plenipotentiaries; and after the concluſion of peace, he went Embaſſador to the Court of Verſailles.

Whether his reſidence in France conduced to impreſs him with favourable ideas of that country, or whether views of policy alone have influenced him, it is unqueſtionable, that his advice and opinion have operated a total and a radical change in the Auſtrian ſyſtem of foreign alliance. There are not wanting perſons here, and thoſe perfectly well informed, who aſſure me that ſo great an alteration of meaſures originated in perſonal reſentment. They aſſert, that at the treaty of Aix-la-Chappelle,

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he was over-reached by the English plenipotentaries, who not only ſigned the peace without his participation; but, afterwards compelled him reluctantly to affix to it his ſignature. They add, that Kaunitz, whoſe gallantries have always formed a very prominent part of his character, was occupied in paying his court to a lady of whom he was deeply enamoured, while the Embaſſadors of Great Britain terminated the buſineſs. His reſentment at being ſo duped and over-reached, prompted him to ſeize a favourable occaſion of precipitating his miſtreſs and the Houſe of Auſtria into the arms of their antient rival. If this ſtory, and the inferences formed on it, are not true in their utmoſt extent, I believe on the other hand, that they are by no means deſtitute of foundation.

In 1754, at forty-three years of age, Prince Kaunitz having ſupplanted his predeceſſor in the cabinet, Count Uhlfeldt, was conſtituted Miniſter for Foreign Affairs. The great war, commonly called in Germany, "the War

" of Seven years," broke out soon afterwards. For a century and a half, the House of Bourbon had been the inveterate hereditary enemy of every Emperor, from Ferdinand the Second, down to Charles the Sixth: while England, from the accession of William the Third, almost invariably sustained the Austrian family and interests. To the active interposition and assistance of the Cabinet of London, aided by the enthusiasm of the people, Maria Theresa herself, when attacked by France and Bavaria, at the beginning of her reign, was not a little indebted for her preservation. Prince Kaunitz nevertheless undertook, in defiance of every impediment, closely to unite the Courts of Vienna and Versailles: he succeeded in the attempt, however improbable, and concluded in 1756, the celebrated treaty, which still continues to connect them. It is not unworthy of remark, that in the lapse of two centuries, no matrimonial alliance had ever taken place between the Imperial Branch of the Austrian Family, and that of Bourbon; Elizabeth, daughter of the Emperor

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Maximilian the Second, who was the laſt inſtance, having been married to Charles the Ninth of France, as long ago as 1570. The Archducheſs Maria Antonietta, by her union with Louis the Sixteenth, only eight years ſince, in 1770, formed the principal cement of this new ſyſtem, which ſeems likely to remain unſhaken, at leaſt during the life of the preſent Miniſter. At the moment that I am writing, the Baron de Breteuil, the French Embaſſador, who acts openly as mediator on the part of Auſtria, is about to appear in that character, at the approaching conferences for peace. We may nevertheleſs reaſonably doubt, whether the affected interpoſition of France in favor of her antient rival, is not more oſtenſible than real; and whether the Cabinet of Verſailles, far from wiſhing to extricate, does not ſecretly enjoy the embarraſſments of its Imperial Ally. How can France, in fact, ſincerely deſire the aggrandizement of the Houſe of Auſtria? How can Louis the Sixteenth contribute to extend the territories of Maria Thereſa and Joſeph? Prince Kaunitz himſelf, though the original author of the preſent

present ſyſtem of alliance; yet, appears to feel how inefficacious it muſt ever prove, in uniting or blending the intereſts of the two ſtates. On a variety of occaſions, he has even appeared to manifeſt far more conſideration for the Engliſh nation, than for the French.

It is difficult to conceive any aſcendant more confirmed, or any influence more imperious, than Prince Kaunitz's over the Empreſs: a circumſtance, the ſingularity of which is increaſed, when we reflect that ſhe is neither a weak, nor an indolent woman. In order to attain to ſuch a height of power, we are naturally led to ſuppoſe, that beſides his ſuperior abilities for Government, he has not been negligent of the arts which conciliate royal favor. That he does not maintain himſelf in his preſent elevation, by any ſuch compliances or attentions, is however certain. Never did any Miniſter appear to ſacrifice ſo little either to the prejudices, or even to the wiſhes and requeſts of his Sovereign. He treats with equal indifference, the teſtimonies of her partiality, or of her reſentment. Far from deſiring to ſee

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her frequently, it is an act of compliance on his part when he visits her. His palace in Vienna is contiguous to that of the Empress, and not a hundred paces from her very chamber. He is not ignorant of the pleasure which she would receive, from seeing and conversing with him on matters of public business; yet, in defiance, or in neglect of her repeated messages, he rarely visits her, except on particular occasions, more than once in twelve days or a fortnight. Every thing is transacted between them by correspondence.

As if the refusal to gratify her reasonable demands, were not a sufficient proof of his ascendancy over her, he shocks her very prejudices. Nay, in more than one instance, Maria Theresa has descended to acts of complaisance, and almost of personal humiliation, in favor of her Minister, which I hardly can venture to mention, from their incredibility. Prince Kaunitz, till within the last few years, was not only attached to women, and gave himself no trouble to

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conceal his irregularities; but he ſeemed as if he wiſhed to render them public and notorious. Actreſſes, dancers, and opera girls of diſtinguiſhed beauty or accompliſhments, lived under his immediate protection. The Gabrieli, who has been ſo celebrated from Palermo to Peterſburgh; the Foliazzi, and various other Italians, known either by the charms of their voice or their perſon, have ſucceſſively ſhared the Auſtrian Miniſter's affection. It is a fact, that when he has gone to wait on the Empreſs, he has carried his miſtreſs in the carriage with him to the gate of the palace; and that ſhe has remained in the coach, while he went to tranſact buſineſs with her Majeſty, from whoſe preſence he immediately returned to her.

That a diſſolute, or a libertine Princeſs, ſuch as Catherine the Second, or her predeceſſor Elizabeth, Empreſs of Ruſſia, ſhould from conſiderations of policy, overlook and pardon ſuch treſpaſſes againſt decorum, would excite no ſurprize. But, that a Sovereign, who, rigidly virtuous in her own conduct, ſeverely

ſeverely repreſſes all infractions of morality in others; ſhould nevertheleſs permit her firſt Miniſter with impunity to commit ſuch irregularities, appears a ſort of paradox. It is certain that the greateſt ſubject in rank throughout the Auſtrian dominions, who, encouraged by the precedent, were to attempt the ſame thing, would ſoon repent his temerity. Even Prince Kaunitz himſelf, I am aſſured, has been many times on the point of receiving his diſmiſſion from all his offices; more, however, from the unaccountable obſtinacy with which he has refuſed to obey the Empreſs's commands, than from her reſentment at his conduct in other reſpects. In vain would any future Miniſter attempt a ſimilar experiment: his diſgrace and ruin would be the infallible conſequence. Not only the preſent Miniſter's talents and ſervices plead for him: long preſcription and habit have made his very weakneſſes reſpectable in Maria Thereſa's eyes. They have grown old together, have ſhared the ſame dangers, weathered the ſame ſtorms, and are

now too intimately acquainted with each other's failings, as well as virtues, to feparate in the evening of life. Thefe caufes fufficiently account for his prefent power, and probably fecure his future authority againft all attack under her reign. No man here looks forward to a change of adminiftration, except by the death of the actual poffeffor. In cafe of fuch an event, either Prince Staremberg, who now governs the Low Countries, or Count Cobenzel, lately returned from Berlin, where he was Envoy, are regarded as likely to fucceed. The latter of thofe Minifters is about to affume an important part, in the approaching negotiations for peace between Auftria and Pruffia.

Againft the event to which I have alluded, as the only one capable of caufing an alteration in the councils of the Emprefs, Prince Kaunitz takes every poffible precaution. No man ever dreaded diffolution more, and age does not feem to have in any meafure reconciled him to its approach. All his exertions fyftematically tend to prolong.

long his life, and his powers of enjoyment, or of gratification. He neglects no means of protracting the term of his existence, which ingenuity can devise, or wisdom can suggest. At table, though he eats very plentifully, he no longer commits any excess; and in order to maintain his health, while he procures an appetite, he never fails to ride in the Manege for a considerable time, every day. A variety of horses brought from all parts of Europe, which he mounts by turns, and manages with no little force as well as address, considering his age; equally contribute to amuse, and to invigorate him. He has long since renounced every other pleasure incompatible with his great object, the preservation of life. These attentions would still be laudable, or at least excusable, if he had not the weakness to fear and to deprecate death, more than a wise man, who knows the uncertain tenure of mortality, can be justified in doing. His apprehensions are so puerile, and so well known, that no person even mentions death in his presence;

presence; a circumstance of which strangers are soon apprized, after their arrival at Vienna. Above all, he dreads the small-pox; a disease which he has never had, and against which he is continually on his guard. Unless some unexpected accident should shorten his career, he certainly bids fair to attain the age of Cardinal Fleury; and like him, to govern with almost unlimited authority, long after the period when men are usually incapacitated, or indisposed by infirmities, for active exertion.

Never, perhaps, did a First Minister request so few, and receive so many favors from his sovereign, as Prince Kaunitz. I know from indisputable authority, that the Empress confers, absolutely unasked and unsolicited, almost every gratification or emolument, which is possessed by himself and the other branches of his family. The eldest of his four sons, Count Ernest, is employed in a civil capacity at home, and has been honored with the order of the Golden Fleece, Two of the others, Dominick

minick and Joseph, are foreign Ministers, one at Madrid, the other at Petersburgh. But, the Prince their father is not supposed to be rich; an incontestable proof that his administration has been more directed to public objects, than to the accumulation of private wealth. Those persons who most severely criticise, or reprobate his system of policy; and many such are to be found here; yet admit his superiority to every sordid or mercenary consideration. So inattentive is he even to the interests of his own children, that they have themselves frequently reproached him with indifference, or with want of exertion on that head. It is difficult to ascertain whether this inattention arises most from genuine disinterestedness, from carelessness of temper, or from a high spirit of independence; perhaps from a combination of all those qualities. His appointments, as Chancellor of State, and Minister for foreign Affairs, though considered as ample here, are far inferior to the salary enjoyed by a First Lord

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of the Treaſury and Chancellor of the Exchequer with us, when thoſe offices are united in the ſame perſon. Including the allowance for his table, they do not exceed forty thouſand florins, or about four thouſand pounds ſterling a year. The difference in the value of money, and in the price of the eſſential articles of ordinary conſumption, muſt, it is true, be allowed greatly in favor of Vienna, when compared with London. But, Prince Kaunitz ſits down regularly to a table of ſixteen or eighteen covers, every day; while an Engliſh Miniſter is not compelled to any ſimilar expence.

In his perſon, Prince Kaunitz is tall, thin, and well-made, though deſtitute of elegance or grace. If his face has not been handſome, it is nevertheleſs a countenance, in which are ſtamped the ſtrong characters of ſenſe and intelligence. His manners are ſtiff; yet, there is in them ſomething characteriſtic and peculiar, which, while it forcibly attracts attention, by no means diſguſts or diſpleaſes. He uſually dreſſes with ſim-

plicity; but on particular occaſions I have ſeen him magnificently habited. The "Toiſon "d'or," ornamented with brilliants, he never fails to wear on his breaſt. He has likewiſe received the order of "St. Stephen," inſtituted by Maria Thereſa in 1764; and he enjoys the peculiar privilege of wearing the ſtar in diamonds, which the ſumptuary laws here forbid to every other ſubject. The letter, or rather note, written to him by the Empreſs, when ſhe conferred on him this mark of diſtinction, is couched in a ſtyle ſo different from the ordinary one of Princes, and beſpeaks ſo much ſenſibility, that I cannot reſiſt inſerting it here. It was addreſſed to Prince Kaunitz near thirteen years ago, on the marriage of the Archducheſs Chriſtina to Prince Albert of Saxony, in April 1766. The lady who gave it me, copied it from the original; and I prefer it to any of the brilliant and ſtudied letters of Frederic, which are circulated and read with ſuch admiration, all over Germany.

" Ce n'eſt pas ſeulement par diſpenſe de " Grand Maitre, mais par diſtinction, que

" vous pouvez porter la Croix de l'Ordre de
" St. Etienne, en diamans. Vous avez tant
" contribuè á l'illuſtrer, que je ſaiſis avec
" aviditè cette occaſion ſi chere à mon cœur,
" de vous temoigner ma reconnoiſſance, qui
" vous eſt due depuis long tems, et qui ne
" finira qu'avec ma vie.

" MARIE THERESE."

After the careleſs or independent manner in which Prince Kaunitz behaves towards the Empreſs Queen, it cannot excite ſurprize, that he treats his equals and inferiors, with ſtill greater marks of contemptuous unconcern. Towards the nobility at large of both ſexes, as well as towards the Miniſters of foreign Courts, he hardly obſerves any meaſures of decorum. Far from accoſting them with civility when they enter his drawing-room, or as they ſurround his billiard table, which is placed at one corner of it; he frequently turns his back on them at the moment when they are about to pay him their court, or when they are deſirous of entering into converſation with him. If the French

 Embaſſador

Embaſſador is exempted from ſo humiliating a treatment, he owes it purely to the neceſſity that Prince Kaunitz feels, of managing in ſome meaſure the repreſentative of a powerful Court, which has connected itſelf by ties of marriage and of policy with Auſtria. But, the preſence of Monſieur de Breteuil certainly impoſes on him no reſtraint whatſoever. In company with the firſt perſons of rank of both ſexes, at his own table, he does not heſitate, every day, after dinner, to paſs at leaſt a quarter of an hour, in the diſguſting occupation of cleaning his teeth, which he performs with all the minute ceremonies of the toilet. Perhaps, ſuch an inſult to decency and to good breeding, never was committed in any civilized country. Certainly it is not known elſewhere; and it would have excited aſtoniſhment mixed with averſion, if it had been practiſed by Charles the Twelfth himſelf; who, though he was accuſtomed to ſpread his butter with his thumbs, yet never violated wantonly the rules of civility towards ladies. I have

been preſent frequently at the ſcene to which I allude, in company with the moſt diſtinguiſhed men and women in Vienna, Auſtrians, as well as foreigners. Is is difficult to puſh contempt for all the forms of poliſhed ſociety to a greater length.

The Auſtrian firſt Miniſter riſes very late, uſually at, or nearly about noon; but he tranſacts public buſineſs in bed during the whole morning, where his ſecretaries attend for that purpoſe. At one o'clock he takes chocolate. His hour of dinner is uncertain, varying capriciouſly from four o'clock, to five, ſix, and ſeven in the evening; in conſequence of which want of punctuality, all who are able, have running footmen ſtationed in the Prince's antichamber, to bring them intimation when he is about to appear. If he accepts an invitation to dine with any perſon, however high his rank, it is only on condition that the wine, bread, and even the water be ſent from his own houſe. The principal diſhes muſt likewiſe be dreſſed by his cook: ſtipulations, which, however humiliating, are never re-

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fuſed by thoſe who aſpire to the honour of entertaining him. No crowned head in Europe, I believe, exacts ſimilar marks of deference from his Courtiers; nor could Louis the Fourteenth have experienced greater proofs of ſervile reſpect, when he condeſcended to viſit his favourite Miniſters or ſubjects. Naturally cheerful, and diſpoſed to the pleaſures of ſociety, Prince Kaunitz nevertheleſs unbends at table. He converſes well on almoſt all topics, reaſons with accuracy, and has a vaſt command of expreſſion. Italian, French, and German, he ſpeaks with no leſs eaſe than fluency; but, French is the language which he uſually talks in company, as being moſt generally underſtood. It is indeed rare to hear him utter a word in German; for which language, like his Pruſſian Majeſty, he does not ſeem to entertain any predilection. To Italians, of whom there are always many in the Court of Vienna, he never fails to addreſs himſelf in Italian, if they do not poſſeſs French in perfection.

His favorite topics of debate or of conversation, are horses, mechanics, and carriages. It is scarcely possible to be a greater Connoisseur than he is, or affects to be, on these subjects; and whenever any of them are mentioned, he harangues with no less perspicuity than information. On politics, as may be supposed, he rarely or never touches; but, on historical points he is easily led out, and displays, without affectation, a very extensive acquaintance with all the great events of modern Europe. If not a man of shining talents, he is unquestionably possessed of great enlargement of mind, much application, and sound judgment, matured by the most perfect acquaintance with all the financial and military resources of the House of Austria. Endowed with uncommon penetration, he seizes with facility the difficulties of any affair; and never was a head better organized, nor more capable of uniting precision with dispatch, in the transaction of public business.

The wisdom of his policy in forming an alliance with France, though the feature in his

his adminiſtration, of which, above all others, he is peculiarly vain, may yet be accounted very problematical; and time alone can affix to it the indelible ſtamp of excellence, or of error. If opinions are however divided reſpecting that meaſure, they are not ſo relative to the partition of Poland, in conſenting to which he committed an irreparable fault, never to be ſufficiently condemned. Quitting the path of juſtice and of honor, no leſs than the true intereſts of his Sovereign, he ſtooped to divide with two other rival Powers, the plunder of a defenceleſs nation, whom he ought ſyſtemetically to have protected and ſupported againſt every invader. Caught in the toils ſpread for him by Frederic, and either a dupe to his own vanity, or deſirous by whatever means to augment the Auſtrian dominions; hé doubtleſs already feels, though he may not avow, the pernicious conſequences of ſo ſhort ſighted a policy. It is evident that Pruſſia alone was a real gainer by that dark tranſaction, where the ſuperior genius of Frederic achieved more in the

Cabinet,

Cabinet, than he had previoufly done in the Field; in which Auftria was completely duped or over-reached; and to which Ruffia was only a reluctant, as well as an involuntary party. It conftitutes the greateft blot in Kaunitz's political character, and will probably be ftill more reprobated by pofterity, than by the prefent age.

His pleafures, at a period of life fo advanced, can neither be very numerous, nor extremely varied. He is fond of Mufic, and likes theatrical entertainments, though he feldom attends them. I have feen him delighted with the "Ombres Chinoifes," when exhibited in a private room, before a felect company. At cards he never plays; but, during the greater part of every evening, he amufes himfelf at billiards, in his own drawing-room. One of his paffions through life, has been architecture, practical as well as theoretical; and it is pretended, that he has not a little impaired his fortune by indulging this elegant propenfity. Certainly he has thrown away immenfe fums; I am told,

told, near a million of florins, or full a hundred thousand pounds, between his house in the suburbs of Vienna, and his seat at Austerlitz in Moravia. Neither of them are yet completed, and he is perpetually pulling down, altering, and repairing. If there is not great exaggeration in these assertions, they will explain the reason, why, after such a long possession of power, he has amassed little wealth for his family. Indeed, it would be difficult otherwise to account for it, since he is not generous; at least not from disposition, though he knows how to affect liberality on proper occasions.

Prince Kaunitz is a good Catholic, but has not any tincture of bigotry or superstition. I believe he rarely, if ever confesses: I know that he never attends, nor hears mass performed, except on Sundays; and then only for ten minutes, not publicly, but in his own house. Superior to the temptation or the love of gold, he is not less exempt from any spirit of vengeance. The natural elevation of his mind raises him above Court-cabal,

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and little minifterial intrigue. An enemy to every fpecies of conftraint, the freedom which he exercifes himfelf, he extends to thofe about him: yet, the confcioufnefs of his dignity never forfakes him for a moment. I have feen him, in his own drawing-room, as unconcerned, and as attentive to every point of his game at billiards, while the Emperor ftood on one fide of him, and the Archduke Maximilian on the other, as though they had both been private individuals of no confequence. He is an Actor, and he never appeared to me to play his part fo well, as on thofe occafions. Towards men of genius, artifts, and perfons diftinguifhed in every line of letters or of fcience, he is affable and polite to a high degree. Gluck not only dines frequently at his table; but, I have known the Prince addrefs his difcourfe to him during the whole repaft, in a manner the moft flattering, while he has not condefcended to notice the firft nobility of Vienna feated near him. In this part of his character, he ftands widely

widely oppoſed to the Auſtrian men of rank, who retain many of the feudal prejudices of their anceſtors, and rarely open their houſes to men of merit or talents, on the footing of acquaintance, unconnected with the advantages of birth.

If flexibility is not to be reckoned among the qualities of Prince Kaunitz, as little likewiſe is diſſimulation. It forms an inſtance, rare in the hiſtory of the world, and more peculiarly of Courts, that a man of ſuch a caſt, though his abilities may be ever ſo eminent, ſhould have attained to power, and have preſerved it for ſo many years. Far from concealing his ſentiments, even on points the moſt delicate, as well as perſonal, he has always expreſſed himſelf with boldneſs. Nothing is better known than his diſlike, I might almoſt ſay his averſion, for the preſent Emperor, when he was ſucceſſively Archduke and King of the Romans, before his father's death. The Prince never mentioned his character, conduct, or underſtanding, except with marks of diſapprobation.

probation. Even after Joseph's accession to the Imperial dignity, he did not alter his language. "The Emperor," said he more than once, "fears *me*, and I dislike *him*." As a protector of the fine arts, and particularly of Music, Kaunitz was deeply hurt at the "Ordonnance" which produced the ruin of the Italian opera. The spirit of innovation and reform, characteristic of all Joseph's regulations, by no means suited the taste of the Minister. "Je ne vois," said he, "que des defences de tous cotés." At that time, his Imperial Majesty never visited nor conversed with him: on the contrary, it was no secret that he held Prince Kaunitz in detestation.

Insensibly, however, their mutual alienation has not only ceased, but has been succeeded by apparent attachment, esteem, and confidence. Those sentiments can scarcely be carried to a higher pitch of reciprocal deference and respect, than at the present moment. How far, views of policy or interest on either side, have conduced to operate

rate ſo total a change, it is impoſſible to aſcertain. Joſeph, who is unqueſtionably a maſter of diſſimulation, may only wait for the proper moment in which to manifeſt his real ſentiments; but people here are univerſally convinced, that no reconciliation was ever more complete or more ſincere. He ſeems to be never ſatisfied with giving the Prince the moſt flattering teſtimonies of conſideration and perſonal regard. During the courſe of the two laſt winters, not content with frequently preſenting himſelf at the drawing-room of the firſt Miniſter, as one of the company; Joſeph has often viſited him in his bed-chamber, in order to converſe with him at more eaſe, on every ſubject of public import. Theſe interviews have been conducted without ceremony or attendants, and not unuſually without any previous intimation on the part of the Emperor.

Whenever he has occaſion to mention the Prince's name, it is accompanied with expreſſions of conſideration for his ſervices and virtues. On the anniverſary of his own birth,

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it is cuſtomary for Prince Kaunitz always to dine with his eldeſt ſon, Count Erneſt, and a ſelect party. Upon the ſecond of February, laſt year, which was the day to which I allude, the firſt Miniſter repaired to his ſon's houſe, about half paſt four o'clock. Candles had not been brought in, though it was already duſk; and the company expecting every minute to be ſummoned to table, were converſing in the drawing-room, when the door opened very gently. A perſon entered, and on his advancing towards the Counteſs Erneſt Kaunitz, they perceived with ſurprize that it was the Emperor. "I am come, Madam," ſaid he, "unaſked, to eat a part of your dinner. I "hope you will permit me on this day to "ſhew my reſpect, and to pay my compli-"ments to Prince Kaunitz." He accordingly ſat down with the other gueſts; but, at table he placed himſelf on the Miniſter's right hand, and did not allow of the ſmalleſt diſtinction being paid him, conſidering himſelf only as one of the company. It was difficult for a Sovereign to ſhew a more delicate or flatter-

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ing mark of attention. I received these particulars from one of the ladies who was present on the occasion.

If Joseph manifests so decided an affection for the Prince, the latter, who now repays it with interest, seems to have no more grateful or pleasing topic of conversation, than the praises of his master. His filial piety and duty; his unwearied exertions for the grandeur of the Austrian House, and the felicity of his subjects; his application to business; his readiness to expose his person in the field, when his country demands it; each of these, and many other of the Emperor's qualities, are the frequent subject of the Minister's eulogium. On the eleventh of April, last year, the day when his Majesty set off from Vienna to join the army in Bohemia, Kaunitz launched out at his own table, on the great endowments which meet in Joseph the Second. "L'Empereur," said he several times, "est un vrai heros." It may, nevertheless, be doubted whether, though he admired the hero, he

approved the heroifm, fince the war has never been confidered as either agreeable to his wifhes, or confonant to his views and policy. Happily for both the Prince and the Minifter, it feems now to be drawing to a conclufion, according to every appearance: a fubject on which I fhall have more to fay in my next letter,

## LETTER XXXV.

*Appointment of the Congreſs at Teſchen, for the concluſion of peace.—Sentiments excited by it at Vienna.—Departure of the Grand Duke of Tuſcany for Florence.—Character of that Prince, and of the Grand Ducheſs of Tuſcany, his wife.—Reflections on the war occaſioned by the Bavarian ſucceſſion.*

VIENNA, *March* 17th, 1779.

AT length, after a painful period of ſuſpenſe and anxiety, I believe I may announce the approach, if not the certainty of peace. As long ago as the 27th of laſt month, a courier from Breſlaw arrived here, with intelligence of all the preliminaries being already adjuſted, and only waiting for ſignature. A congreſs, deſigned to ſettle the terms of the definitive treaty, was at firſt fixed to meet at Troppau in Auſtrian Sileſia; but the little town of Teſchen, capital of the duchy of the ſame name, near the

frontiers of the Imperial Poland, is ſince ſubſtituted in place of Troppau. As belonging to Prince Albert and the Archducheſs Chriſtina, Teſchen, which is a ſort of neutral ſpot, may be thought proper for the meeting of plenipotentiaries. Otherwiſe, a more wretched and deſolate collection of huts, could hardly have been found in any corner of Europe. An armiſtice, preparatory to negotiation, took place on the 8th of the preſent month. The Baron de Breteuil, and Count de Cobenzel, late Envoy Extraordinary at the Court of Berlin, were immediately named to repair to Teſchen, on the part of France and Auſtria. Prince Repnin, and the Baron de Riedazel, Miniſter to the Court of Vienna from his Pruſſian Majeſty previous to the war, are likewiſe appointed on the ſide of Frederic, and of his ally, Catharine. But, Count Cobenzel having been unexpectedly ſeized with a fit of the gout, which incapacitated him for travelling; his relation, John Philip Cobenzel, has been ſubſtituted in his place.

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The French Embaſſador and he ſet off for the place of negociation, on the eighth, the day when the armiſtice commenced. The Court of St. James's, which, on former occaſions, might have been called in as mediator, if not as umpire, in the quarrel, is completely excluded, and ſeems to be as little conſidered on either ſide, as the meaneſt Italian Republic. Neither the vigor of our counſels, nor the ſucceſs of our arms at the preſent moment, tend to impreſs Germany and Europe with reſpect.

Notwithſtanding the apparent certainty of the approach of peace, great diſcontent prevails in this Capital. Not only the inglorious manner in which the war has been conducted; the circumſtances likewiſe, under which a Congreſs is about to be opened, excite a degree of ferment approaching to indignation; ſince it is well known that the Pruſſians ſtill continue in Bohemia. But, neither the Court nor the cabinet, neither Joſeph nor the Prime Miniſter, ſeem inclined to proſecute hoſtilities. Relative to the

the terms upon which peace will ultimately be made, we can only conjecture: no one here, however, doubts that it muſt be purchaſed by a partial, if not by a total reſtitution, of the territories which occaſioned the rupture. Frederic, ſtrong in the cauſe that he eſpouſes, ſuſtained by the open aid of Saxony, and by the avowed ſupport of Ruſſia, poſſeſſes great advantages over his adverſary. France is neither ſuppoſed to interfere with zeal, in favor of Maria Thereſa and her ſon; nor, embarraſſed as Louis the Sixteenth now is by a war with England, can he, were he even ſo diſpoſed, extend effectual aſſiſtance to the Empreſs Queen. Catharine, on the contrary, irritated againſt the Auſtrian Miniſter, who, in the partition of Poland, and on other occaſions, has ſhewn as little reſpect for her intereſts, as deference for her wiſhes, acts vigorouſly in favour of Pruſſia. The Princes of the German Empire look on, and enjoy with a malignant pleaſure, the embarraſſments, as well as the humiliation, of

of the Imperial Cabinet. Under theſe circumſtances, it is probable that the Court of Vienna will not refuſe, and has already reſolved, to make the ſacrifices, however ample or painful, neceſſary for enſuring peace.

Another event, which confirms the ſuppoſition, is the return of the Great Duke and Ducheſs of Tuſcany, to Florence. They doubtleſs delayed their departure, till the deciſion of ſo great a point, in which Leopold muſt neceſſarily feel himſelf deeply, though not immediately involved. He is in fact the preſumptive, eventual heir, to all the dominions of Maria Thereſa, as long as his elder brother is neither married, nor has any iſſue. On the ſame day when the armiſtice took place, and on which the Auſtrian and French Embaſſadors ſet off for Teſchen, the Great Duke and Ducheſs left Vienna, for Florence. After an affectionate and tender adieu on the part of the Empreſs, they proceeded to Baden, only four leagues diſtant, to which place Joſeph and all the other members of the Imperial Family ac-

companied them. There they dined together, and the two brothers parted, with mutual teſtimonies of affection and regret. Maria Thereſa's infirmities did not allow her to be of the party.

Relative to the Great Duke, I have ſaid little in theſe Memoirs; as, though he has been here ſeveral months, I have had comparatively few opportunities of ſeeing him; neither he nor the Great Ducheſs mixing in ſociety. He is ſix years younger than the Emperor, of a middle ſize, well made, and apparently of a more robuſt conſtitution than Joſeph. Never did two brothers leſs reſemble each other in perſon and in manners. Leopold has not either the intelligence of countenance, the reſtleſs activity of mind, or the communicative and affable diſpoſition of the Emperor. His features, grave and ſaturnine, are deficient in dignity, as well as in animation. In their baldneſs upon the crown of the head, and in that reſpect only, the brothers are alike. Perhaps, a long reſidence in Italy, may have

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contributed to render the Great Duke more reserved than if he had remained in Germany, where the national character is frank and open. It is indisputable, that he likes Florence better than Vienna; a preference, it must be owned, equally natural and pardonable. Independently of the position and climate, which are in favor of the Tuscan Capital, he is there a Sovereign; here he is only an elevated individual. Though less ingratiating and accessible than his elder brother, he is beloved and esteemed by those who enjoy his confidence, and who know how to appreciate his merits. His mind is far more cultivated likewise, by an extensive acquaintance with polite letters, and even with some branches of science. Under a serious exterior, he conceals from common eyes the defects, which Joseph's more unguarded manners expose; but, his gallantries have been not less general or notorious, than those of any of his predecessors of the celebrated House of Medicis. In the administration of Tuscany, peculiarly

in the amelioration of its laws and police, he is ſaid to have diſplayed application, ſteadineſs, and judgment; qualities, which it is probable he may, at ſome future time, have occaſion to exerciſe on a greater and more conſpicuous theatre. Joſeph, whoſe intentions not to marry a third time, are well known, regards him as his ſucceſſor; and the two brothers either feel, or affect to feel, a very warm attachment for each other.

Of the Grand Ducheſs of Tuſcany, in common with almoſt every perſon here, I know ſtill leſs from perſonal obſervation, as ſhe is hardly ever ſeen in public; her delicate ſtate of health incapacitating her for much exertion or amuſement. Daughter of the preſent King of Spain, Charles the Third, ſhe reſembles him in the lineaments of countenance; and no Princeſs can have ſlenderer pretenſions to perſonal beauty, grace, or elegance. Her figure is meagre, her face thin and pale, her complexion ſallow, her noſe long, as well as large, and her ſight contracted. Nor are her manners and de-

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meanor better calculated to repreſent the Majeſty of the Imperial Throne, which it is poſſible ſhe may one day aſcend; an event that ſhe is ſaid not to contemplate with much complacency, or to anticipate with any impatience. Like her huſband, ſhe is conſidered here as more partial to the Tuſcans, than to the Germans. If ſhe is deficient in perſonal charms, ſhe is not leſs ſo in female accompliſhments. A Neapolitan education, completed in Spain, was probably not very favourable to the diſcloſure or cultivation of her natural endowments. But, every deficiency of an external and ornamental nature, is amply compenſated by the intrinſic worth and ſolid excellence of her character. Devoted to her children and her huſband, beyond whom ſhe knows no object of affection or enjoyment, in them centre all her cares. Domeſtic and retired, ſhe ſhuns public exhibitions, in which neither her health, her turn of mind, nor her manners, enable her to appear with advantage. A numerous family, conſiſt-

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ing of nine Princes and Princeſſes, by whom the Houſe of Auſtria muſt in all probability be perpetuated, occupy her time, and engroſs her whole attention. Little known beyond the limits of Florence or of Vienna, ſhe is well recompenſed for the want of admiration and celebrity, by the reſpect and attachment of the few, who are acquainted with her virtues.

I am now about to leave this Capital, after having witneſſed the origin, the progreſs, and probably the termination, of the Bavarian quarrel. A rupture of ſuch importance, has awakened the Imperial Court from the long repoſe of fifteen years, which ſucceeded the great war terminated in 1763. Joſeph the Second, and Prince Kaunitz, have found more ſerious occupations for their time, than travelling or building. Frederic, in oppoſing the ambition of the former, has diſcloſed the ſecret and diſcordant ſprings, which actuate the movements of the Auſtrian Cabinet; and has brought forward to the public eye, the

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three principal perſonages who compoſe it, more than could have been done by a much longer period of tranquillity. Whatever portion of the Bavarian ſucceſſion may be retained by Auſtria, at the definitive treaty of peace; the eſſential advantages, as well as the glory, of having taken up arms in defence of the Palatine Houſe, and of the Germanic Syſtem, remain with his Pruſſian Majeſty. If he has not acquired the ſame laurels as in former wars, he has at leaſt checked the career of Joſeph the Second, at its outſet; and he has proved to Europe at large, that time, though it may have tempered the ardor of his counſels, or the rapidity of his movements, has not diminiſhed his vigilance, nor impaired his exertions. France, however ſhe may be connected by ties of marriage, or of pretended policy, with Maria Thereſa, has rather affected to give, than has really extended, any aid to her on the preſent occaſion: while Catharine the Second, neither mollified by the advances, nor conciliated

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by the blandiſhments of the Auſtrian Cabinet, has interpoſed as arbitreſs in the diſpute, and has compelled the Empreſs Queen, or rather her Son, to ſheathe the ſword. Such is, or is about to be, the termination of Joſeph the Second's raſh attempt to appropriate a part of Bavaria. It has embittered the evening of his mother's reign, without augmenting her glory, or raiſing his own reputation; though it may poſſibly add ſomewhat to the extent of the Auſtrian dominions. As I am on the point of ſetting out for Venice, I ſhall not however witneſs the final treaty, which, while it determines that point, will reſtore tranquillity to this part of Europe.

I remain, &c. &c.

THE END.

Luke Hanſard, printer, near Lincoln's-Inn Fields.